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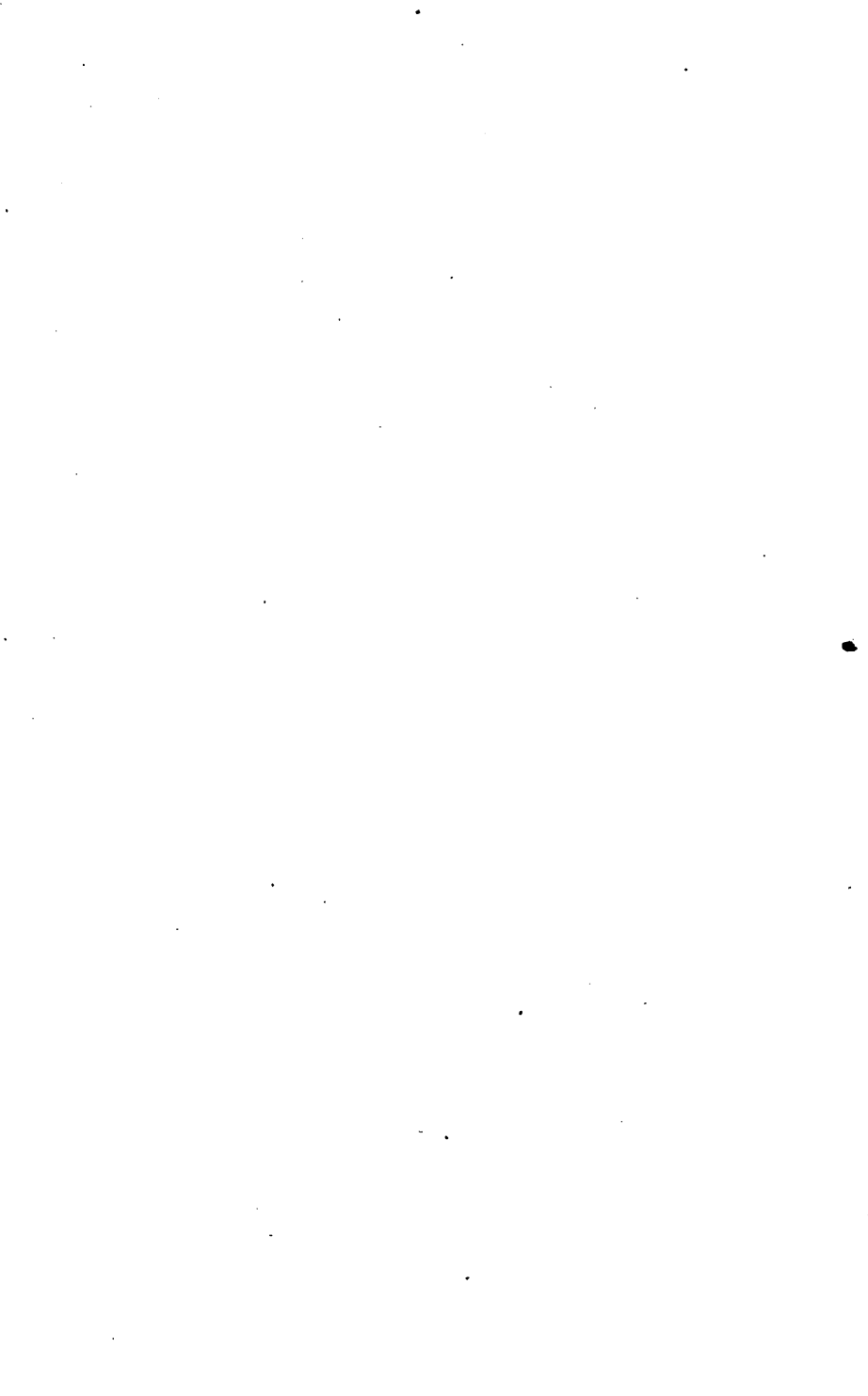
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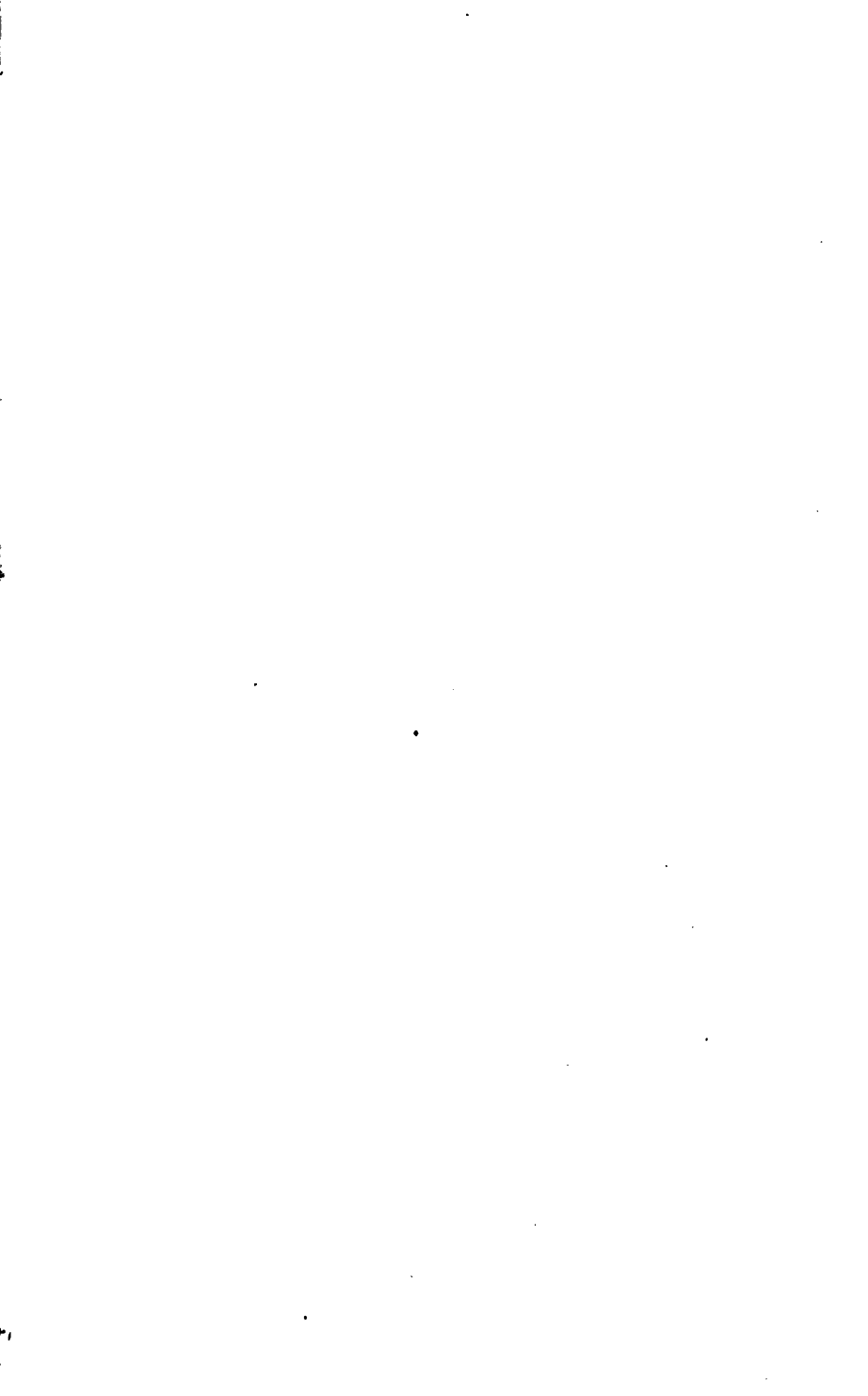


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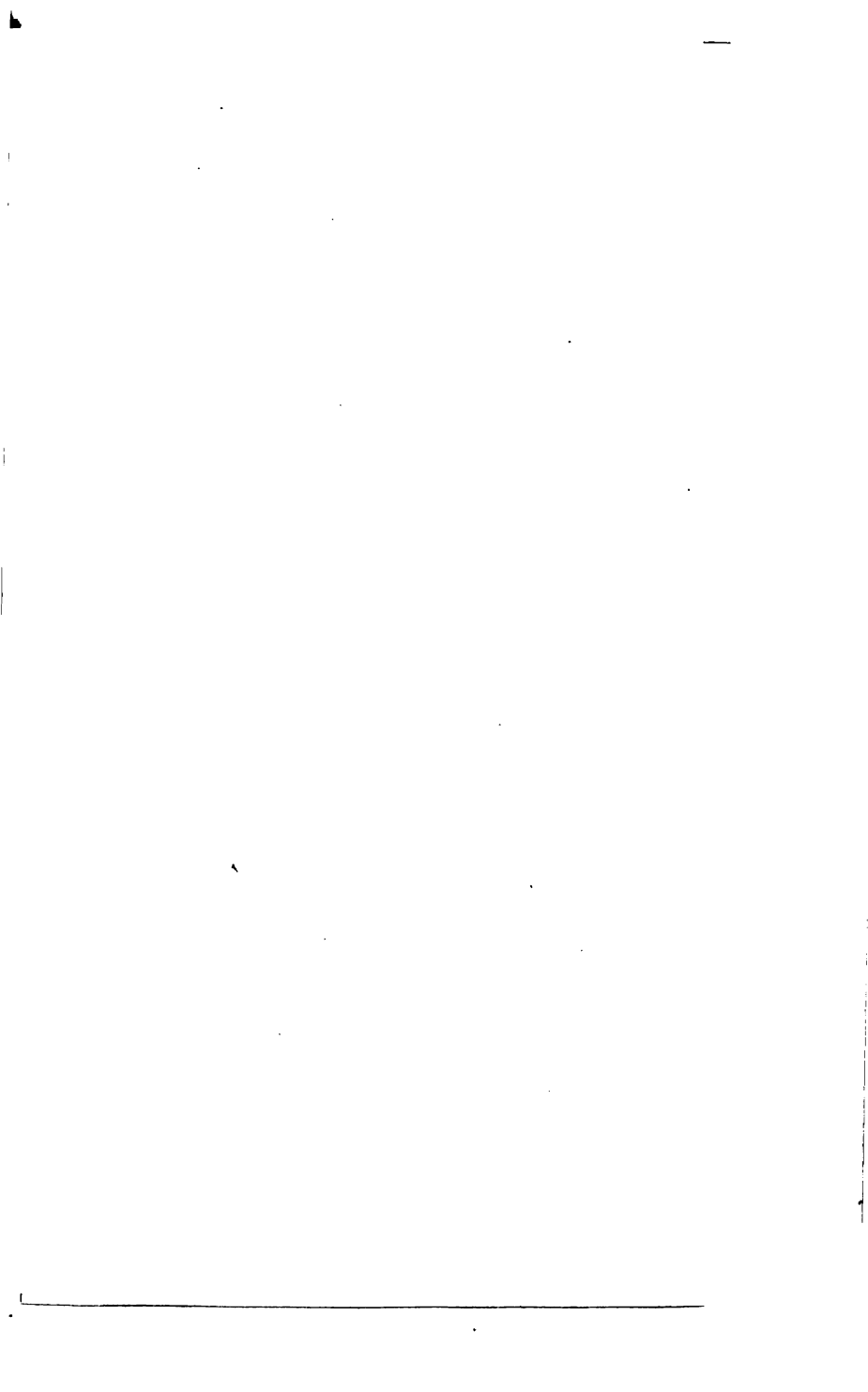
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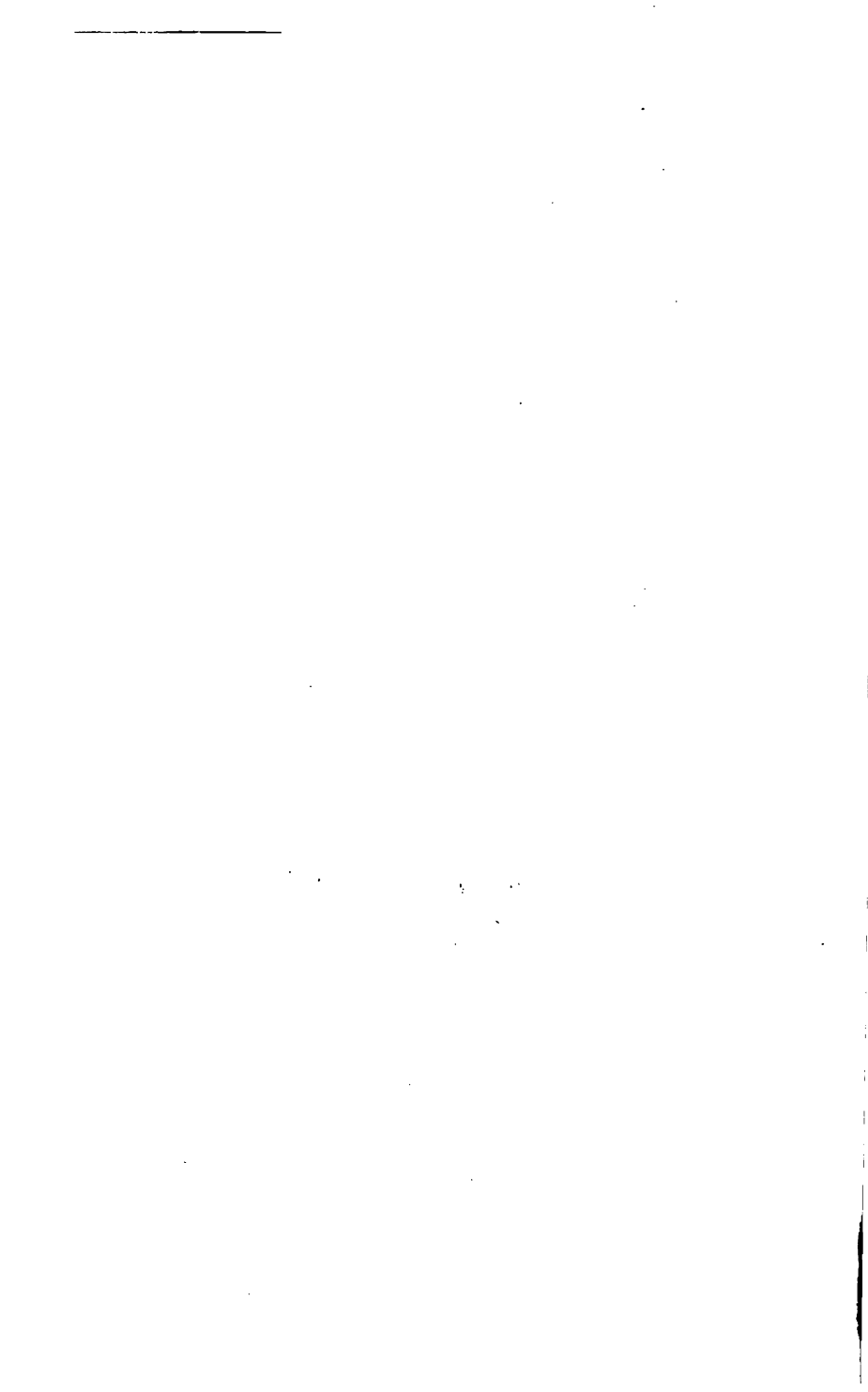


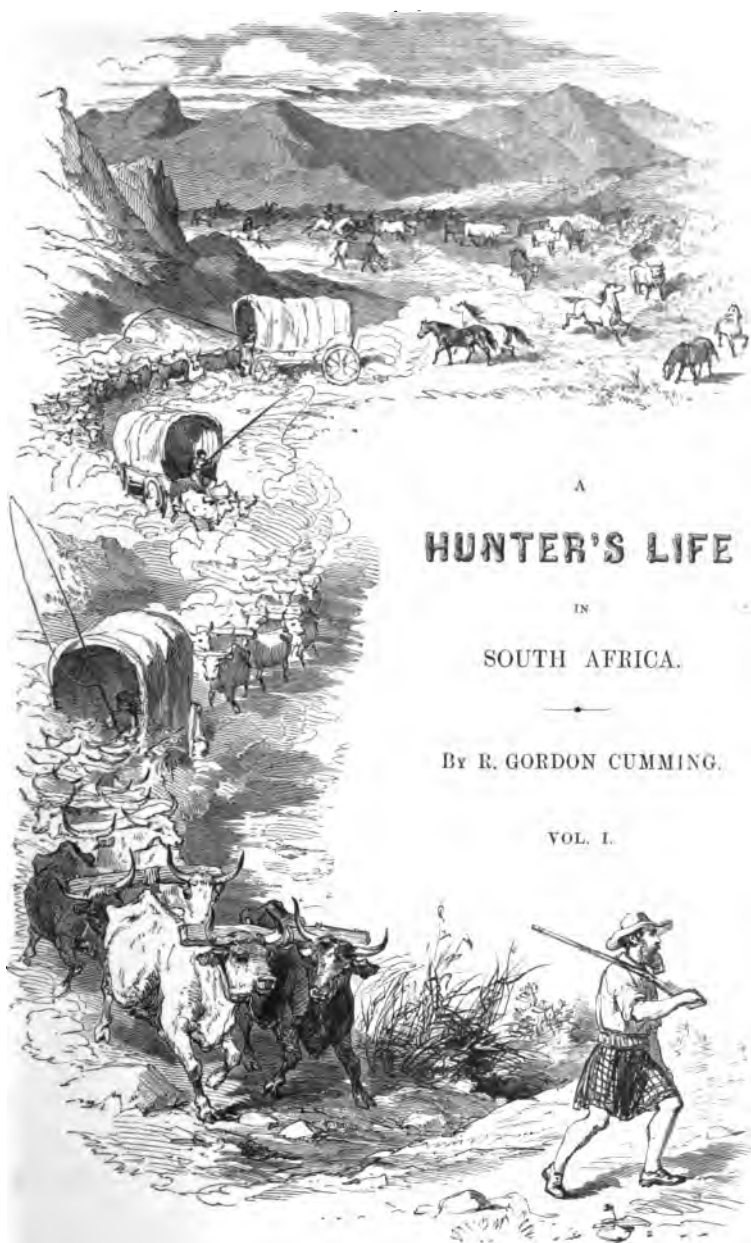




An Attack upon Four Patriarchal Lions.







A
HUNTER'S LIFE

IN
SOUTH AFRICA.

By R. GORDON CUMMING.

VOL. I.

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.



FIVE YEARS
OF A
HUNTER'S LIFE
IN THE
FAR INTERIOR OF SOUTH AFRICA.

WITH NOTICES OF THE NATIVE TRIBES, AND ANECDOTES OF THE
CHASE OF THE LION, ELEPHANT, HIPPOPOTAMUS, GIRAFFE,
RHINOCEROS, &c.

BY ROUALEYN GORDON CUMMING, Esq.,
OF ALTYRE.

With Illustrations.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—Vol. I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1850.



PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

MY DEAR DUKE,

I dedicate my 'ADVENTURES IN AFRICA' to your Grace for two reasons,—to mark my respect as a kinsman, and because I know the interest you take in the sports of the field and in the habits of wild animals.

My volumes lay claim to no other merit than that of a faithful narration of facts as they occurred: and having been written far away from literary appliances, and often on occasions when the cravings of hunger were a more pressing consideration than the graces of composition, I trust to your indulgence to overlook in the success of my rifle the failure of my pen.

I am always, my dear Duke,

Your affectionate Kinsman,

ROUALEYN GORDON CUMMING.

Altyre, June, 1850.



INTRODUCTION.

As the reader who purposes to follow me through the five adventurous years I spent in the untrodden wilds of Southern Africa might like to know something of my previous career, I shall briefly state that the early portion of my life was spent in the county of Moray, where a love of natural history and of sport early engendered itself, and became stronger and more deeply rooted with my years. Salmon-fishing and roe-stalking were my favourite amusements; and, during these early wanderings by wood and stream, the strong love of sport and admiration of Nature in her wildest and most attractive forms became with me an all-absorbing feeling, and my greatest possible enjoyment was to pass whole days and many a summer night in solitude, where, undisturbed, I might contemplate the silent grandeur of the forest and the ever-varying beauty of the scenes around. Long before I proceeded to Eton I took pride in the goodly array of hunting trophies which hung around my room.

In 1839 I sailed for India, to join my regiment, the 4th Madras Light Cavalry. Touching at the Cape of Good Hope, I had an opportunity of hunting several

of the smaller antelopes, and obtained a foretaste of the splendid sport I was in after years so abundantly to enjoy. In India, I procured a great number of specimens of natural history, and laid the foundation of a collection which has since swelled to gigantic proportions.* Finding that the climate did not agree with me, I retired from the service and returned home, where, resuming my old hunting habits, I was enabled, through the kindness of a wide circle of friends, to follow my favourite pursuit of deer-stalking so successfully that I speedily found myself in possession of a fine collection of select heads from most of the Scottish deer-forests. Growing weary, however, of hunting in a country where the game was strictly preserved, and where the continual presence of keepers and foresters took away half the charm of the chase, and longing once more for the freedom of nature, and the life of the wild hunter—so far preferable to that of the mere sportsman—I resolved to visit the rolling prairies and rocky mountains of the Far West, where my nature would find congenial sport with the bison, the wapiti, and the elk. With this view I obtained a commission in the Royal Veteran Newfoundland Companies. But I speedily discovered that the prospect of getting from the barrack-square would be small, and that I should have little chance of playing the Nimrod whilst

* Which may now be seen in my South African Museum at the Chinese Gallery in London.

attached to this corps. I accordingly effected an exchange into the Cape Riflemen, and in 1843 found myself once more in the country upon whose frontiers dwelt those vast herds of game which had so often fired my imagination, and made me long to revisit it.

Immediately upon landing I marched with my division of the army of occupation, under the command of Colonel Somerset, into the country of the Amaponda Caffres, where we lay for some time under canvas, and where our principal amusements were quail-shooting and throwing the assagai. Being disappointed in my expectations, and there being at that time no prospect of fighting, I made up my mind to sell out of the army, and to penetrate into the interior farther than the foot of civilized man had yet trodden—to vast regions which would afford abundant food for the gratification of the passion of my youth,—the collecting of hunting trophies and objects of interest in science and natural history. And in this I ultimately succeeded to my heart's desire.

With regard to my African adventures the following pages must speak for themselves. Let me here state, however, that I was the first to penetrate into the interior of the Bamangwato country, and that my axe and spade pioneered the way, which others have since followed. I should have pushed still farther but that the great losses I experienced in cattle and horses prevented me from so doing.

During the many years I spent in the wilderness, my waggon was my only home. Even this I often deserted ; and alone, or attended only by savages, proceeded on distant hunting expeditions, leaving my few followers encamped around my baggage. Days and nights, on these occasions, have I passed in my solitary hunting-hole, near some drinking-place, watching the majestic carriage of the lion, the sagacious actions of the elephant, and the curious instincts of the countless varieties of game that have passed within a few yards of me, quite unaware of the proximity of man. Whatever on those occasions I witnessed worthy of attention, I noted in my journal whilst the impression was yet fresh in my memory—from this journal the following work is almost literally transcribed. Written under such circumstances, the reader will not look for the graces of style. The hand, wearied all day with grasping the rifle, is not the best suited for wielding the pen. If I have in simple language given pleasure to the sportsman, or added one page to the natural history of Southern Africa, or to our knowledge of its tribes, I shall think myself amply repaid for my many wanderings and watchings in a wild and savage land.

Altyre, June, 1850.

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FIVE YEARS' HUNTING ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

Preparations for a Hunting Expedition — Cape Traders — Travel-
ling — Trader at a Farm — Dangers of a Trader's Life — Ar-
ticles for Barter — Dissuasions from the Enterprise — My Outfit
— Hunting Rheebock — Wild Flowers.

HAVING resolved to make a hunting expedition into the interior of Southern Africa, my first object was to seek out some experienced person, able to give me the necessary information as to what purchases I should require to make in the way of waggons and oxen, and as to my outfit in general, and I accordingly pitched upon an individual of the name of Murphy, a trader in the interior, who, I had reason to believe, was better acquainted than any other person in Grahamstown with the frontiers of the colony, and the adjoining territories of the Griqua and Bechuana tribes, situated beyond the Great Orange River. With this person I had already

had the pleasure of becoming acquainted during the short time I was quartered in Grahamstown in the month of July, having been introduced to him by another trader, a man from my own land of Moray, famous among the Dutch Boers about and beyond the frontiers. This man's name was Andrew Thompson, of Forres, one of three brothers, all of whom followed the same adventurous line of life, and were as steady, hard-working, and determined young men as might be met with throughout the colony.

As, in the course of the following pages, I may have occasion to allude to these traders, and others of a similar avocation, it will perhaps be as well to give the reader a sketch of the manner in which their occupation is conducted. Each trader is supposed to be the proprietor of one or two ox-waggon. These they "load up," from the large stores of the merchants in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, with every species of merchandise which the far-dwelling isolated Dutch Boers are likely to require. So supplied, they set out on their long journey, which usually occupies from six to eight months; at the end of which they return to the colony, enriched with immense droves of sleek oxen and fat wethers, selected from the numerous herds and flocks of the pastoral dwellers in the interior. The waggons of a trader generally contain every requisite for a farmer's establishment; groceries, hardware, bales of cloth and canvas, haberdashery, saddlery, crockery—in short, everything, from an awl for the Boer

to mend his "feldtschoens" or country shoes, to a roll of cherry-coloured or sky-blue riband to tie up the bonny brown locks of his fair daughters, whose beauty, like that of Skye terriers, I fear, in many cases, consists in their ugliness. They, however, sadly lack the "dégagée" appearance of the Skye terrier, as their general air and gait might be more aptly likened to a yard of pump-water.

As the trader advances up the country and effects exchanges, he leaves the cattle or sheep which he has bartered, in charge of their former master, picking them up on his return southward. When all his goods are disposed of, he generally winds up his barter by exchanging the waggon or waggons which bore them for cash or oxen, or both, and then, purchasing a horse, he returns in light marching order to the colony.

The price which a trader gives for a waggon is usually from 40*l.* to 60*l.*, and in war times often a thousand rix dollars, or 75*l.* The number of oxen which he usually obtains for it at the close of his journey is from forty to fifty, and these he is supposed to select himself. The value of the waggon is partly dependent on the character of the tent. Tents are of two kinds; the one being coarsely yet strongly constructed of green boughs fitting into iron staples along the sides of the waggon, and lashed together with strips of green hide so as to form a succession of arches overhead. These are kept in their position by means of long straight wands laid all along the outside of the arches,

the whole framework being very strongly secured by the aforementioned strips of green hide. On the top of this are placed coarse Kaffir mats made of reeds, which act as a Scotchman (to use a seafaring phrase), to keep the waggon-sail, which is of stout canvas, from chafing. The other variety of tent is of a less homely build, and is termed by the colonists a cap-tent waggon. It requires the hand of a skilful waggon-builder, and is much more elaborately finished, the wood which supports and composes the tent being all neatly sawed and planed, and fastened together with iron rivets.

This description of waggon is preferred by the aristocracy among the Boers, as presenting a more distinguished appearance, when they drive their fraus and children on a round of visits, which they are constantly doing; or when flocking to the "Nachmal," or communion, which happens three or four times in the year. The former, or common wand tent, however, possesses a great advantage over the cap-tent, inasmuch as, in the first place, it is cheaper by 10*l.*, and secondly, if broken in a capsized, which in Cape travelling is an affair of common occurrence, it is easily repaired on the spot; whereas the cap-tent waggon, if once upset, is irretrievably ruined.

When a trader arrives on a Boer's farm, he halts and walks up to the door to inquire where he is to "outspan," or unyoke the oxen, and also in what direction the oxen are to be driven to graze. At the door he is met by the

baas, or master, generally pipe in mouth, who, cordially greeting him with one hand, raises his hat from his head with the other. The Boers lay great stress on this piece of etiquette, which has to be gone through with a whole string of juvenile Boers following in the rear, each encased in a very roomy pair of inexpressibles, and crowned with an immense broad-rimmed tile, nearly half the size of its wearer. Permission to outspan being obtained, and a few complimentary speeches interchanged, the trader inquires of the Boer if he has any fat oxen to handle or barter, to which the Boer either at once replies in the negative, or more commonly says, "I do not know. What have you got on your waggon?" The trader answers, "I have got a little of everything, and all of the very best quality, and you shall have anything you require as low as a trader can possibly sell it. I shall presently unload a little for your inspection." The Boer politely says, "No, no, mynheer, you must not offload; it would grieve me that mynheer should exert himself so much:" to which the trader replies, "It is no trouble; we are accustomed to do it, and it is our business." The trader then instructs his knecht, or head servant, to make a parade of the goods, and he then accompanies the Boer into the house, where dinner will shortly make its appearance, to which the Boer invariably, in the most hospitable manner, makes every white stranger welcome. Here, if the trader is wide awake to his own interest, he

will pay marked attention to the Noë or frau, as no bargain or transaction of any nature can be ratified with a Dutchman without *her* full concurrence and approval. The Dutch are particularly cleanly in their establishments and cooking, and moreover possess a very fair notion of the culinary art, their tables in general being graced with several very excellent and substantial dishes. When dinner is over, all hands resort to the waggon and overhaul the merchandise, where it is ten to one but the Noë will find about fifty different articles which she will prevail upon her husband to believe indispensable in the private economy of his establishment. Thus when "handling" once begins, it often goes on briskly, and from a Boer who at the outset declared himself independent of the trader's supplies, as many as two or three, or even half a dozen, fat oxen may be obtained.

As the trader knows well from past experience that the Boer will be sure to endeavour to abate his prices, he makes a point of asking a little more than he intends to take, so as to be able to give in to the Boer's importunities, who, with a sly wink at his wife, congratulates himself on his shrewdness, and flatters himself that he has run a hard bargain.

When the trader has collected all his cattle, he drives them by steady marches, of from twenty to thirty miles in the twenty-four hours, which are performed chiefly during the night, to Grahamstown or Beaufort, where he

disposes of them to butchers. At the former place they are purchased for the use of the town, and by the Government contractors for the supply of the troops. At Beaufort, which is on the high road to Cape Town, they are purchased for the supply of the Cape Town market. The payments for the cattle are seldom, if ever, made in hard cash, the poor trader having to content himself with approved bills, drawn at six and nine months, which in too many cases are never honoured, the defaulter being found either bankrupt, or to have bolted for England or California. The life of a trader is hard and harrassing, and he is often liable to very heavy losses by deaths from severe drought, distempers, and other causes; also from the chances of war, oxen straying and being found no more, overstocked markets, and non-payments as above, besides the danger to which he is exposed from the attacks of wild beasts. During the time that he is engaged in driving his oxen, his rest is necessarily broken and disturbed, and, being compelled to watch his cattle every hour of the night, in all weathers, he is obliged always to have his clothes on, and to sleep when he can, after the manner of sea-captains in bad weather, who hang their nose on to a ratlin, and so take a nap. As an instance of the injury from chances of war I may here allude to the severe losses sustained by my friend Mr. Peter Thompson, who, during the war which ravaged the colony in the years 1846 and 1847, was

returning to Grahamstown with a large herd of some hundred fine oxen, the well-earned proceeds of a laborious and toilsome expedition, when he was attacked in De Bruin's Poort, a rugged and densely-wooded ravine, within one march of Grahamstown, by a band of the marauding Amaponda Kaffirs, armed with guns and assagais, who swept off the whole of his drove, he himself barely escaping with his life.

In years when the prices of cattle are low, these traders occasionally vary their line of march, and, forsaking the Boers for a season, they load up a suitable cargo, and direct their course for the Bechuana tribes, from whom they obtain ivory, karosses (skin cloaks), and ostrich-feathers, along with various curiosities, for which they obtain a ready sale in the Grahamstown market, where good ivory averages from 4s. to 4s. 6d. per pound. Karosses vary in price from 1l. to 3l. each, according to their size, kind, and quality. Ostrich-feathers used to fetch from 5l. to 6l. per pound, but, partly owing to the feathers being less worn by the votaries of fashion in London, and partly to the late disturbances throughout Europe, the prices have greatly fallen.¹ The articles required for trading with the Bechuana tribes consist of beads of all sizes and colours, brass and copper wire, knives and hatchets, clothing

¹ From seventy-five to ninety good sized ostrich-feathers weigh a pound.

for both sexes, ammunition, guns, young cows, and she-goats. The two latter the trader obtains in barter from the Boers, Griqua and Koranna tribes, more immediately adjacent to the colony. Some writers have erroneously stated that snuff and tobacco are a good circulating medium among the tribes in Southern Africa, but in the course of my experience I can scarcely remember having ever obtained the smallest article in barter for either, not even a drink of milk. The natives have certainly no objection to receive these articles when given gratuitously, but are far too wide awake to place any great value upon them. During my career in Southern Africa I have had much experience in trading with the Bechuana tribes, and, as I shall have occasion to refer to my trading exploits in the course of my narrative, I have entered into the above particulars, that the reader may, at the outset, form an idea of the manner in which these things are conducted.

On making inquiries, I had the pleasure to find that, contrary to my expectation, both Andrew Thompson and Murphy were still in Grahamstown, where I had left them about three months before, when I marched thence into Caffraria with my regiment; and the latter, whom I found to be a confirmed tippler, was able, in his few lucid moments, to give me much valuable information relative to the preparations which I required to make in the way of purchasing oxen and waggons, engaging servants,

&c. &c. ; also various wrinkles as to the conducting of my establishment, the hours of marching, and the line of country which I had chalked out for my first expedition. Poor Murphy ! he was as kind-hearted a creature as ever breathed.

From the 1st till the 22nd of October I was actively employed in making the necessary purchases and arrangements for my coming expedition, and in forwarding my affairs, in which Murphy, during his sober intervals, most willingly assisted me. As the reader will observe, my establishment at my first outset was on a much more limited scale than upon subsequent expeditions. This was partly owing to the uncertainty which I felt as to the success of my sporting undertakings, and the length of time which I might feel inclined to devote to this line of life. I was much in the dark as to what sport I might expect to realize, and what difficulties I should have to encounter, in the trip I was about to make ; the truth being that I could not find a single individual, either among the natives or the military, who could in the smallest degree enlighten me on the subject.

The general impression amongst my military friends was, that any game which remained in the interior must have, ere then, retreated to such remote parts, far away in the territories of savage tribes, as to be utterly beyond the reach of any sportsman, however enterprising ; and when they saw me bustling about, making my purchases,

they used to say to me, "It is all nonsense your laying out your money in this way. Why don't you rather go home at once to your own country? We shall see you returning in a month or two, like those fellows who went on a shooting trip last year, with a *coup-de-soleil* and an attack of dysentery, utterly disgusted with the country, and selling off all these things on which you are now expending so much capital."

The shooting party here alluded to consisted of one officer of the 7th Dragoons, two of the 27th, and others who, having obtained a few weeks' leave, and burning to distinguish themselves in a campaign against the feræ of Southern Africa, had hired a waggon, and penetrated as far as the Thebus mountain, where for a few days they enjoyed some good sport among the black wildebeest and springboks which abound on the plains surrounding that mountain; till, having broken the stocks of their rifles in falls from their horses while impetuously "jaging" the game, they returned to head-quarters, one suffering from *coup-de-soleil*, and the rest from dysentery brought on by drinking bad water, they having been unfortunate in the vley beside which they had fixed their encampment. My gallant friend, Lieutenant H——, of the 91st, was one of the most urgent in endeavouring to dissuade me from my steadfast purpose of trekking up the country, and recommended me rather to return with him to England, whither he was about to proceed. He

and I had sent in our resignation of her Majesty's service at the same time, and fortunately for us, by some mistake, our papers were mislaid at Cape Town, and not forwarded in the usual course, whereby we gained several months' pay. H——, who, like many others of the military, entertained a profound disgust for the colony and everything connected with it, at first could hardly believe that I was in earnest when I spoke of going up the country; and when convinced that such was my determination, he said, with a strong lisp which was habitual to him, "Good G—, Cummin! you are thurely mad to remain longer in thith country after you have obtained leave to return to dear old England. I athure you, I had rather be a thoe-black in England than live in thith beathtly country."

Notwithstanding these friendly dissuasions on the part of my acquaintance, I continued to prosecute my affairs so unremittingly, that on the 22nd I considered my manifold arrangements complete, and, being much harassed and annoyed by the unavoidable delays to which I had been subjected, I was full of impatience to make a start. These delays were in a great measure occasioned by the weather, heavy and constant rains having fallen during the previous fourteen days, accompanied with a cold wind off the Southern Ocean. This, of necessity, materially interfered with and delayed me in my arrangements, and had also the effect of rendering the country perfectly unfit

for locomotion, in many places cutting up the roads with rugged impassable watercourses, and in low-lying districts converting them into deep, impracticable quagmires.

It will here be necessary to give a detailed account of my outfit, to put the reader at once in possession of the extent and nature of my establishment and camp equipage. My first object was, of course, to secure a travelling waggon, and I had the good fortune to obtain an excellent new cap-tent one, complete with all its gear ready for inspanning, from Mr. Ogilvie, of Grahamstown, for the sum of 60*l.*; which, as it eventually proved to be a right good one, was decidedly a bargain. I very soon, however, found out, as I extensively collected specimens of natural history, that one waggon was insufficient; and not long after, in the town of Colesberg, on the frontiers of the colony, I purchased a second, also a cap-tent waggon, with its necessary accompaniment, a span of oxen; and at a later period, as the reader will subsequently learn, I found it necessary to purchase a third, and became the proprietor of considerably more than a hundred draught oxen.

From an English farmer in the vicinity of Grahamstown I obtained a span of twelve excellent, well-trained, black, zŭŭr-veldt oxen, which I judged suited for my work, they having been in the habit, with their late

master, of bringing in very heavy loads of wood to the Grahamstown market. Their price was 3*l.* each ; and as it is not unusual to see an ox, in the best of spans, knock up on long marches, by Murphy's advice I purchased two spare oxen of Mr. Thompson.

My stud of horses as yet consisted of but two, which had been my chargers in the regiment. These were "Sinon," a stallion which I had bought of Major Goodman of the 27th, and "The Cow," an excellent dark-brown gelding which I had obtained from Colonel Somerset of "Ours." I did not think it wise to lay out more money in horse-flesh in Grahamstown, as I should shortly have to pass through the Hantam, where most of the Boers breed horses extensively, which are famed for their spirit and hardiness throughout the colony. I engaged four servants,—namely, an Englishman called Long, as head-servant, a thorough cockney, who, as I afterwards learnt, had formerly been a cab-driver in London, and whom I took into my service at Murphy's recommendation, Long being supposed to possess a certain degree of experience, having penetrated as far as the banks of the Orange River on a trading excursion on his own account ; but his heart, as the event proved, inclined more to worship at the shrine of Venus than at that of Diana. A certain little dark-eyed damsel, who acted as laundress to the military, and who was employed all day in driving her mangle, seemed entirely to engross his thoughts—Long

frequently observing that "there was that sweet little creature obliged to drive a mangle who ought rather to be sitting practising at her 'pihanne.' "

My other three servants were natives. A waggon-driver named Kleinboy, a stout active Hottentot, with the high cheek-bones and woolly head of his race, and who was quite *au fait* at his department. Like many others of his countrymen, he was subject to fits of sulks, and much preferred reclining for hours under my waggon, or in the shade of a bush practising on his violin, to looking after his master's work. My leader's name was Carollus : he was the third whom I had engaged in that capacity, the other two having absconded. He was a stout powerful fellow, descended from the Mozambique races. He entered my service under cover of night, having absconded from Kingsley of "Ours"—that gentleman, according to his assertion, being in the habit of administering a little wholesome correction with the jambok, which on further acquaintance with him I had reason to believe he richly merited. My third native servant was Cobus, a Hottentot of light weight, the son of a veteran in my regiment. He 'listed in the capacity of after-rider, and proved to be first-rate in his calling, being the best horseman I met with in South Africa. He also, like Kleinboy, was liable to fits of sulkiness, through which I eventually lost him, for on one occasion finding it necessary to inflict on him a sum-

mary chastisement, he deserted from my service in consequence.¹

¹ The baggage, provisions, and general stores which I carried with me were as follows :—Two sacks, containing 300 lbs. of coffee, four quarter-chests of tea, 300 lbs. of sugar, 300 lbs. of rice, 180 lbs. of meal, 100 lbs. of flour, 5 lbs. of pepper, 100 lbs. of salt, an anker of vinegar, several large jars of pickles, half a dozen hams and cheeses, 2 cases of gin, 1 anker of brandy, 1 half-um of Cape brandy, iron baking-pots with long legs, stewing and frying pans, saucepans and gridirons, tin water-buckets of various sizes, 2 large “fagie” or water-casks, an accompaniment which no Cape waggon is ever without, 2 large flasks of tar to be subsequently mixed with hard fat for greasing the wheels when required, 6 dozen pocket knives, 24 boxes of snuff, 50 lbs. of tobacco, 300 lbs. of white, coral, red, and bright blue beads of various sizes ; 3 dozen tinder-boxes ; 1 cwt. of brass and copper wire, which the Bechuana tribes, especially those dwelling to the east, readily barter and convert into ornaments for their legs and arms ; 2 dozen sickles, 2 spades, 2 shovels, 1 pickaxe, 5 superior American axes, 2 augers, 1 stock and 36 bits, hatchets, planes, drawing-knives, several coarse chisels for waggon-work, a vice, blacksmith and carpenter’s hammers, and a variety of other tools appertaining to both these professions. A gross of awls, a gross of sail-needles, 50 hanks of sail-twine, 2 bolts of sail-canvas, several rolls of stout woollen cloths, 2 dozen gown-pieces, 6 dozen Malay handkerchiefs ; thread, needles, and buttons ; ready-made jackets and trowsers for my people, several dozen coarse shirts, Scotch bonnets, and cocker-nonnys (as for shoes, colonial servants are supposed to make them for themselves) ; a few medicines, arsenical soap, English and coarse Boer’s soap. Also, 1 large bell-tent, 1 mattress and bedding, 1 camp-table and chair, and my canteen, which most fortunately I had resolved to retain when disposing of my other military equipments : I found it a most serviceable and convenient appendage during my five years’ wanderings in Southern Africa. My saddlery consisted of 2 English hunting-saddles, 2 common saddles for servants, and

While I was laying in these stores, I once or twice amused myself by riding in quest of rheebok in the rugged and precipitous high grounds lying immediately to the south of Grahamstown. On one of these occasions I was accompanied by my cousin, Colonel Campbell of the 91st (one of the bravest and most distinguished officers

1 pack-saddle to convey venison to camp. My ordnance was as follows:—3 double-barrelled rifles by Purdey, William Moore, and Dickson of Edinburgh—the latter a two-grooved, the most perfect and useful rifle I ever had the pleasure of using; 1 heavy single-barrelled German rifle, carrying 12 to the lb. This last was an old companion, which had been presented to me, when a boy, by my dear and much-lamented friend and brother-sportsman, the late James Duff of Innes House. With this rifle, about ten years before, I had brought down my first stag on the Paps of Jura, and subsequently bowled over many a princely master-stag and graceful roebuck in his summer-coat, throughout the glens and forests of my native land. The Purdey was also a tried friend, both it and the heavy German having been with me in several campaigns on the plains and in the jungles of Hindostan. I had also 3 stout double-barrelled guns for rough work when hard riding and quick loading is required. Several lead-ladles of various sizes, a whole host of bullet-moulds, loading-rods, shot-belts, powder-flasks, and shooting-belts; 3 cwt. of lead, 50 lbs. of pewter for hardening the balls to be used in destroying the larger game; 10,000 prepared leaden bullets, bags of shot of all sizes, 100 lbs. of fine sporting gunpowder, 300 lbs. of coarse gunpowder, about 50,000 best percussion-caps, 2000 gun-flints, greased patches and cloth to be converted into the same. I carried also several spare yokes, yoke-locks, whip-sticks, rheims, and straps, 2 sets of spare linchpins, all of which last articles belong to the waggon. With the above, and 200*l.* in cash which I carried with me, I considered myself prepared to undertake a journey of at least twelve months amongst Boers or Bechuanas, independent of either.

in the late Kafir war, and withal about the best rifle-shot and keenest sportsman then in the colony), a brother of Captain Campbell of Skipness, the author of the 'Old Forest-Ranger,' a work highly approved amongst Indian Nimrods. The rheebok is a species of antelope generally found in all mountain districts throughout Southern Africa, from Table Mountain to the latitude of Kuruman or New Litakoo. Of the rheebok there are two varieties : the rhooye-rheebok, or red rheebuck ; and the vaal-rheebok, or grey rheebuck. The range of the vaal-rheebok, to the northward, ceases in the latitude of the Long Mountains lying to the south of Kuruman ; the other variety is met with as far north as the mountains in the territory of Sichely, chief of the Baquaines, about fifty miles to the north of the Kurrichane range. Both of these antelopes frequent high and rocky mountains. The manner of hunting them is alike ; and, when properly pursued, I think more nearly resembles Scotch Highland deerstalking than the pursuit of any other antelope.¹

¹ Throughout the grassy mountains which the hunter must traverse in following this antelope, his eye is often gladdened by romantic dells and sparkling rivulets, whose exhilarating freshness strongly and pleasingly contrasts with the barren, rocky mountain heights and shoulders immediately contiguous. The green banks and little hollows along the margins of these streamlets are adorned with innumerable species of brilliant plants and flowering shrubs in wild profusion. Amongst these, to my eye, the most dazzling in their beauty were perhaps those lovely heaths for which the Cape is so justly renowned. These exquisite plants, singly, or in

groups, here adorn the wilderness, with a freedom and luxuriance which, could the English gardener or amateur florist behold, he might well feel disheartened, so infinitely does Nature in this favoured clime surpass in wild exuberance the nurselings of his artificial care. I remember being particularly struck with two pre-eminently brilliant varieties, the one bearing a rose-coloured, the other a blood-red bell; and though I regret to say that I am but a poor botanist, even in the heat of the chase I paused, spell-bound, to contemplate with admiration their fascinating beauty. Others, with their downy stems and waxen flowers of every gaudy hue, green, lilac, and various shades of pink, red, and crimson; some of them with brown lips to the bell, flourished in the richer hollows of their native glen, or bloomed with equal loveliness along the arid cliffs and fissures of the overhanging rocks. Almost equalling the heaths in beauty, and surpassing them in the additional attraction of their scented leaves, a whole host of geraniums fill the balmy breeze with their delicious perfume. These are too well known to admit of any novelty in description, but I may mention, *en passant*, that they attain a far larger growth in their native soil than I have been in the habit of seeing in our greenhouses. Small groups of the lofty, fair, conscious-looking iris, rear their graceful heads along the edges of the streams. Their fairy forms reflected in the waters, "they seem to stand like guardian Naiads of the strand." Another tribe of plants, which particularly delighted me from old associations, though not so striking as many of its neighbours for perfume and brilliancy, was composed of several varieties of the light, airy fern, or bracken, which, whether gracefully overshadowing the mossy stones, eternally moistened by the bubbling spray of the stream, which they kissed as it danced along, or veiling the grey lichen-clad masses of rock in the hollows higher up, strongly reminded me of those so conspicuously adorning the wild glens in the mountains of my native land. Besides these, a thousand other gay flowers deck the hills and plains wherever the eye can fall. Endless varieties of the ixea, the hæmanthus, the amaryllis, the marigold, and a number of everlasting flowers, are scattered around with a lavish hand; also the splendid protea, whose sweets never fail to attract swarms

of the insect tribes, on which several bright kinds of fly-catchers, their plumage glancing in the noonday sun, are constantly preying. Farther down these watercourses, in the dense, shady ravines, the jungle is ornamented with long tangled festoons of different creepers, among which the wild jessamine ranks foremost, hanging in fragrant garlands amid the shaggy lichens, and bunches of bright orange-coloured missletoe, for which the forests of Africa, in the vicinity of her sea-coasts, are so remarkable. While touching on the floral beauties of the hills more immediately adjoining the sea-coast, I may remark that here are the great nurseries for heaths and geraniums. As the traveller advances up the country these gradually disappear, and, together with the animal kingdom, the vegetable world assumes entirely new features; the colonial forest-trees and bushes, herbs and plants, being succeeded by a vast and endless world of loveliness; unseen, unknown, untrodden, save by those varied multitudes of stupendous, curious, and beautiful quadrupeds, whose forefathers have roamed its mighty solitudes from primæval ages, and with whom I afterwards became so intimately acquainted.

CHAPTER II.

Mysteries of Inspanning — Cape Waggon and its Furniture —
Departure from Grahamstown — My head Servant leaves me
— Impassable state of the Roads — My Waggon in a Fix —
Change of Route — Singular Instinct of the Honey-bird.

ON the 23rd of October, 1843, having completed my final arrangements, and collected and settled all outlying debts, the weather, which had been wet and stormy for many days past, assuming a more settled appearance, I resolved to “inspan” and “trek,” which the reader will bear in mind mean to yoke and march. I accordingly communicated my intentions to my followers, and despatched my leader Carollus to the neighbouring mountains, where my cattle were supposed to be pasturing, to bring them up. He expended the greater part of the day in searching for them in vain about their wonted feeding-ground: at length, late in the afternoon, he chanced to meet a comrade, who informed him that the oxen he was seeking were safely lodged in the “skit-kraal,” or pound, Colonel Somerset, of “Ours,” having detected them in the act of luxuriating in a field of green forage. This pleasing intelligence demanded

my immediate attendance at the skit-kraal, where, by a disbursement of nine shillings, I obtained their release.

Having secured my oxen, my next business was to find my servants, who were all missing. Long, as I expected, was found gallantly assisting the dark-eyed heroine of the mangle, and Kleinboy and Cobus were discovered in a state of brutal intoxication, stretched on the green-sward in front of one of the canteens, along with sundry other waggon-drivers and Hottentot Venuses, all in the same glorious condition, having expended on liquor the pay which they had extracted from me in advance on the plea of providing themselves with necessaries. Drunk as they were, Carollus, who was sober, managed to allure them to the waggons, and, Long assisting, the inspanning commenced. As no man who has not visited the Cape can form any idea of the manner in which this daily operation is performed, it will here be necessary to explain it, and to say a few more words concerning the structure of a waggon.

The Cape waggon is a large and powerful, yet loosely-constructed vehicle, running on four wheels. Its extreme length is about 18 feet, its breadth varying from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 feet; the depth of the sides is about 2 feet 6 inches in front, but higher towards the back of the waggon. All along the sides two rows of iron staples are riveted, in which are fastened the boughs forming the tent, which arches over the waggon to a height of 5 feet, with an awn-

ing of Caffre mat, and a strong canvas sail over all, with "fore-clap" and "after-clap," which is the colonial name for two broad canvas curtains, that form part and parcel of the sail, and hang in the front and rear of the waggon, reaching to within a few inches of the ground. In the front is placed a large chest occupying the extreme breadth of the waggon, on which the driver and two passengers of ordinary dimensions can sit abreast. This is called the fore-chest, and is secured from sliding forwards by two buffalo rheims, or strips of dressed hide, placed across the front of it, and secured to the sides. A similar chest is fastened in like manner to the rear of the waggon, which is called the after-chest. Along the sides of the waggon, and outside it, are two longer and narrower chests called side-chests. These are supported by two horizontal bars of hard wood riveted to the bottom of the waggon. The side-chests are very convenient for holding tools, and all manner of odds and ends too numerous to mention. The fore and after chests are likewise extremely useful for containing clothing, ammunition, and a thousand small articles in daily use. Along the sides of the tent are suspended rows of square-cut canvas bags, called side-pockets, in which the traveller keeps his hair-brushes and combs, razors, knives, tooth-brushes, soap, towels, or anything else which he may wish to have at hand. I used to devote one to contain my luncheon, which often consisted of a slice of elephant's trunk.

The traveller sleeps upon a sort of cot, termed a "cardell." This cardell is a light, strong, oblong frame, about eight feet in length, and occupying the breadth of the waggon. It is bored all round with small holes, through which strips of hide are interlaced, forming a sort of network on which the mattress rests. This cot is slung across the waggon, and is attached with thongs to the bows of the tent, its elevation being regulated by the cargo, which is carefully stowed away beneath it in the body of the waggon. Suspended underneath the hind part of the vehicle is a strong wooden framework called the trap, on which the pots and girdirons are lashed during a march. The waggon is steered by a pole, called the dissel-boom, to the end of which is fastened the trektow, a stout rope formed of raw buffalo-hide. It is pulled by a span, or team, consisting of twelve oxen, which draw the waggon by yokes fastened along the trektow at regular intervals by means of strips of raw hide. Passing through each end of the yoke, at distances of 18 inches from one another, are two parallel bars of tough wood about 18 inches in length; these are called yoke-skeys. In in-spanning, the yoke is placed on the back of the neck of the ox, with one of these skeys on either side, and towards the ends are notches in which is fixed the strap, made of twisted hide; this, passing under the neck of the animal, secures him in the yoke.

Besides these straps, each pair of oxen is strongly

coupled by the buffalo rheims, which are used in catching and placing them in their proper order, preparatory to inspanning them: a rheim is a long strip of prepared hide with a noose at the end; it is made either of ox or buffalo hide, and is about eight feet long. A waggon is also provided with a tar-bucket, two powerful iron chains which are called the rheim-chains, and a large iron drag called the rheim-schoen: also the invariable whip and jambok; the former consisting of a bamboo pole upwards of 20 feet in length, with a thong of about 25 feet, to the end of which is sewn with "rheimpys," or strips of dressed steinbok-skin, the "after-slock," and to this again is fastened the "fore-slock," corresponding with the little whipcord lash of the English coachman. The "fore-slock," about which the waggon-drivers are very particular, is about a yard in length, and is formed of a strip of the supple skin of some particular variety of antelope prepared in a peculiar manner. The skins of only a few species of antelopes are possessed of sufficient toughness for this purpose. Those most highly prized amongst the colonists are the skins of the hartebeest, koodoo, blesbok, and bushbuck; when none of these are to be obtained they use the skin of a he-goat, which is very inferior. The colonial waggon-driver wields this immense whip with great dexterity and grace. As he cracks it he produces a report nearly equal to that of a gun, and by this means he signals to his leader, who is perhaps herding the oxen

at the distance of a mile, to bring them up when it is time to inspan.

The "jambok" is another instrument of persuasion, indispensable in the outfit of every Cape waggon. It is made of the thick tough hide either of the white rhinoceros or hippopotamus. Its length is from 6 to 7 feet; its thickness at the handle is about an inch and a half, and it tapers gradually to the point. These jamboks are exceedingly tough and pliant, and are capable of inflicting most tremendous chastisement upon the thick hides of sulky and refractory oxen. Those manufactured from the skin of the hippopotamus are very much superior to those of the rhinoceros, being naturally of a much tougher quality. If properly prepared, one of these will last for many years. A smaller description of jambok is manufactured for the benefit of horses, and may be seen in the hands of every horseman in the colony.

When the leader brings up the oxen to the waggon to be inspanned, the waggon-driver if possible sends another Hottentot to his assistance, especially if any of the oxen in the span happen to be young or refractory. These, armed with a huge jambok in one hand, and a handful of stones in the other, one on either flank, with shouts, yells, and imprecations, urge forward the unwilling team toward the yokes, where the driver is standing with the twelve long buffalo rheims hanging on his left arm, pouring forth a volley of soothing terms, such as—"Ah!

now, Scotland! Wo ha, Blauberg! you skellum, keer dar Carollus for Blauberg, ye stand somar da, ich wich-na wha yo hadachta ist." (Turn there for Blauberg; you stand there in an absent state, I do not know where your ideas are.) "Holland, you ould Myfooty!" ("Myfooty" is a common Hottentot term, which I would defy even themselves to construe. The Dutch word "somar," mentioned above, is also a word to which I think I could challenge the most learned schoolmaster in the colony to attach any definite meaning. It is used both by Boers and Hottentots in almost every sentence; it is an answer to every question; and its meanings are endless.) "Slangfeldt, you neuxel!" (Snakefield, you humbug!) "Wo ha, now, Creishmann!" (Crooked man.) "Orlam, you verdomde Kind, vacht un bidgte, ich soll you krae." (Civilized! you d—d child; wait a bit, I'll serve you out.) "Vitfoot, you duivel! slahm dar für Vitfoot, slahm ihm dat he barst!" (Whitefoot, you devil! flog there Whitefoot, flog him till he bursts.) "Englandt, you ould ghroote-pench! Ah now! Wo ha! Ye dat so lowe ist in die shwor plach, und dharum so vees at inspanning! Vacht un bidgte, ich soll a plach for you aitsuch. Ye lob da for nett so as ye will, mar ich soll you arter bring, whar ich kann you mach like baikam." (England, you old big-paunch! Ah now! Wo ha! You who are so lazy in the heavy place, and nevertheless so vicious at inspanning. Wait a little. I shall seek out a place for

you! You tramp there in front, exactly as you please; but I will yoke you farther back, where I can reach you with facility.) This is said in allusion to "England's" having lately been in the habit of being yoked in the front of the team, and if it is very long the driver cannot reach the leading oxen with his whip without descending from the box, and, therefore, when a fore-ox becomes lazy, he is yoked farther back in the team, that he may have the full benefit of the persuasive "fore-slock."

While the driver's tongue is pouring forth this flow of Hottentot eloquence with amazing volubility, his hands and feet are employed with equal activity; the former, in throwing the open noose of the rheim, lasso-like, over the horns of each ox, and drawing it tight round them as he catches him; the latter in kicking the eyes and noses of those oxen which the jamboks and shouts of the leaders behind have driven too far in upon him. At this moment "Blauberg," who is an old offender, and who acquired in early youth the practice which he has never relinquished of bolting from the team at the moment of inspanning, being this day unusually lively, not having had any severe work for some weeks, suddenly springs round, notwithstanding Kleinboy, well aware of his propensities, has got his particular rheim firmly twisted round his hand; and having once got his tail where his head ought to have been, and thus deprived Kleinboy of all purchase over him, he bounds madly forward, heedless of a large sharp

stone with which one of the leaders salutes him in the eye. By his forward career, Carollus is instantly dashed to the ground ; and Kleinboy, who has pertinaciously grasped the rheim in the vain hope of retrieving the matter, is dragged several yards along the ground, and eventually relinquishes the rheim, at the same time losing a good deal of the outer bark of his unfortunate hand. Away goes Blauberg in his headlong course, tearing frantically over hill and dale, his rheim flying from his horns like a streamer in the wind. His course lies right across the middle of the Cape-Corps barracks, where about forty or fifty riflemen who are lounging about, parade being over, rush to intercept his course, preceded by a pack of mongrel curs of every shape and size, but in vain. Blauberg, heedless of a shower of sticks and stones hurled at his devoted head, charges through the midst of them, nor is he recovered for the space of about two hours.

The rest of the team, seeing their driver sprawling on the ground, as a matter of course follow Blauberg's example : instantly wheeling to the right and left about, away they scamper, each selecting a course for himself, some with and others without the appendage of the streamers. The Hottentots, well aware that it will be useless to follow Blauberg in the usual way, as he would probably lead them a chase of four or five miles, now adopt the most approved method usually practised in such

cases. They accordingly drive out a small troop of tamer oxen, with which they proceed in quest of the truant. This troop they cunningly induce Mr. Blauberg to join, and eventually return with him to the waggon—the driver, with pouting lips and the sweat running down his brow, pouring forth a torrent of threatened vengeance against the offending Blauberg. The inspanning is then once more commenced as before, and Blauberg, being this time cautiously placed in a central position, well wedged up by the other oxen, whereby he is prevented from turning about, is lassoed with the strongest rheim, and firmly secured to the steady old ox who has purposely been driven up beside him. The twelve oxen are soon all securely yoked in their proper places; the leader has made up his “fore-tow,” which is a long spare rheim attached round the horns of each of the fore or front oxen, by which he leads the team, and inspanning is reported to be accomplished.

I omitted to mention that the two fore-oxen, and the two after-oxen, which are yoked one on either side of the “dissel-boom,” or pole, are always supposed to be the steadiest, most intelligent, and tractable in the team. The two fore-oxen in particular, to be right good ones, require a combination of excellences, as it is indispensable for the safety of the waggon that they thoroughly understand their duty. They are expected, unguided by reins, to hold the rarely-trodden roads which occur

throughout the remoter parts of the colony either by day or night ; and so well trained are these sagacious animals that it is not uncommon to meet with a pair of fore-oxen which will, of their own accord, hold the “spoor” or track of a single waggon which has perhaps crossed a plain six months previously.

In dangerous ground, however—where the narrow road winds through stones and rocks, or along the brink of a precipice ; or where the road is much intersected by water-courses, and bordered by the eternal hillocks raised by the white ants, which are of the consistence of a brick, being formed, during damp weather, of clay, which the sun afterwards hardens ; or where the “aard-varcke,” or ant-bear, with his powerful claws has undermined the road with enormous holes—the fore-oxen, however trustworthy, should never be left to their own devices, but the leader should precede them, leading by the tow. This safe and highly necessary precaution is however rarely practised by the ruffianly Hottentots if the “baas” or master is not present, these worthies preferring to sit still and smoke their pipes or play their violins during the march, to performing their duty, thus frequently exposing their master’s property to imminent peril. It is thus that more than half the capsizes, broken axletrees, broken dissel-booms, and smashed cap-tents, daily occur throughout the colony. All being now in readiness, and some pots and spades, which the Hottentots as a matter

of course had omitted to stow away in their proper places, being securely lashed on the trap and to the sides of the waggon, the illustrious Kleinboy brandishes his huge whip, and cracking it with a report which loudly reverberates throughout the walls and houses of the Cape-Corps barracks, shouts out, with stentorian lungs, "Trek, trek, you duivels! Rhure y'lla dar vor, you skellums! Ane spoor trap, you neuxels! Tabelberg, you ould kring! Trek, you löwe paar marys. Schneeberg, you löwe Satan! Blauberg, you duivel's kind!"—(Draw, draw, you devils! Move yourselves forward, there, you skellums! Tramp all in the same track, you humbugs! Table Mountain, you old ring! Draw, you lazy troop of mares! Snow Mountain, you lazy Satan! Blue Mountain, you child of the devil!)—At the same moment he catches the refractory Blauberg the most terrific wipe round the ribs with his fore-slock, accompanied by a sharp report like the discharge of a pistol, upon which a cloud of blue hair is seen to fly from the ox, and a long red streak, down which the blood copiously flows, denotes the power of the weapon the driver so mercilessly wields over the backs of his horny team. At last the huge and heavily-laden waggon is in motion, and rolls lightly along after the powerful oxen, which on level ground seem scarcely to feel the yokes which lie across their necks.

Requiring to pick up several large parcels at the stores of some of the merchants in the town, we trekked down

the main street of Grahamstown ; and in passing the shops of the butchers and bakers, laid in a large supply of bread and fresh meat for immediate use. Before we had proceeded far, some sharp-sighted Hottentots came running after us, calling out that a fountain of tiger's milk had started in the stern of the waggon ; and on halting we discovered that several loose cases of gin which I had purchased for immediate use, and which had not been properly stowed, had sprung a leak. The Hottentots seemed to regret amazingly the loss of so much good liquor, and endeavoured with their hands to catch it as it fell. Owing to the various delays which had occurred during the day, I did not get more than half a mile clear of Grahamstown when the sun went down ; and there being then no moon, I deemed it expedient to halt for the night. We accordingly outspanned ; and the Hottentots, having secured the oxen to the yokes, and picketed my two horses on the wheels, requested my permission to return to the town to take another farewell of their wives and sweethearts. This I did not deem altogether prudent ; but, knowing well that if I withheld my consent they would go without it, I considered it best to comply with a good grace ; and, granting a general leave of absence, took on myself the charge of the castle which was destined to be my home during the next five years.

The Hottentots, strange to say, according to their pro-

mise, returned to the waggon during the night, and next morning, at earliest dawn of day, I roused them, and we inspanned. When this was accomplished, my head servant Long not appearing, we marched without him ; but we had only proceeded about three miles when he managed to overtake us, the road being hilly and very soft, owing to the recent rains. On coming up and recovering his breath, he expressed himself very much disgusted at my starting without him, when I took the liberty of explaining that I expected my servants to wait for me, and not that I should tarry for them. Our progress was considerably impeded by the bad state of the roads, and at ten A.M. we halted for breakfast beside a pool of rain-water, having performed a march of about nine miles. Here, having outspanned our oxen, we set about preparing our gipsy breakfast: one collected sticks for the fires, another filled the kettles at the adjoining "vley," while Long and I were busied in spreading the table and dusting the beefsteaks with salt and pepper.

Having permitted the oxen to graze for a few hours, we again inspanned, holding the high road for Somerset ; and about sundown we halted for the night on the farm of a Mr. Fichett, a great sheep-farmer, who received me hospitably, and invited me to dine with him. Here I met Captain Codrington, who had lately sold out of the 7th Dragoons. Our march this day lay through a succession of low, undulating hills, richly clothed with a variety of

grasses, herbs, and flowers, with here and there large patches of dwarfish evergreens. I had directed my Hot-tentots to kraal the oxen that night, with the intention of making an early start on the following morning, but the herd managed to lose them in the thick underwood. They were, however, recovered at an early hour on the following morning, and, having breakfasted, I was about to proceed, when Long, with a face worthy of his name, came up to me with a whole tissue of dire complaints about his personal inconveniences, the most galling of which appeared to be his having to sleep on the ground in the tent. On my friend's advancing these objections, I saw very plainly that he was not the man for my work, as the life before us was by no means likely to be one of luxury; so having made over to him his impedimenta, and paid him his month's wages, I wished him a safe return to Grahamstown.

It was a lovely day, with a bright blue sky overhead, covered with light, fleecy clouds, and the trees and shrubs, freshened by the recent rains, emitted an aromatic perfume. Having proceeded some miles, we commenced ascending the Zuurberg range, where we were met by two waggons from Somerset, laden with oranges for the Grahamstown market, of which I purchased several dozen, and found them excellent. The drivers of these waggons informed me that the road in advance was almost impassable, owing to the recent heavy rains. Although

their oxen were better than mine, and their waggons lighter by some thousand pounds, they had had great difficulty in coming on, and they recommended me to retrace my steps, and, crossing the country, try the other road by De Bruin's Poort. Notwithstanding their remonstrances, I resolved to push on and give it a trial.

About midday I outspanned for two hours, to let the cattle graze ; after which, having proceeded a few miles, we found the road so cut up that we were obliged to abandon it, and trek along the rugged hill-side, holding a course parallel to it. Marching in front, and sinking up to my ankles in mud at every step, I endeavoured to select the hardest ground, on which the waggon might follow. The ground now every moment became worse and worse ; the panting oxen, straining every nerve to keep it in motion, and halting every hundred yards to take breath. At length the wheels suddenly sank deep into the soil, and became immoveably fixed, upon which we made loose our shovels and pickaxe, and worked hard for half an hour, clearing away the soil in front of and around the wheels ; which, being accomplished, we rigged out a fore-tow and extra yoke to inspan my two spare oxen, and then set our whole fourteen to draw, but they could not move the waggon an inch. We then lightened it of a part of the cargo, and, after half an hour's further labour, we had relieved the waggon of upwards of three thousand pounds ; but still

the oxen, notwithstanding the most unmerciful application of both whip and jambok, failed to move it. The thought then struck me of pulling it out backwards; we accordingly cast loose the trektow, and, having hooked on the long span or team to the after-part of the waggon, we succeeded in extricating it from its deep bed. We next proceeded with much care and trouble to stow away the baggage which we had removed, and the oxen being again placed in their position we resumed our journey; but, before we had gone three hundred yards, the waggon again became engulfed, sinking into the earth to such a depth that I half expected it would disappear altogether. The nave of the wheel was actually six or eight inches below the surface. This put us at our wits' ends, and I began to think that, if this was to be our rate of travelling, my hair would be grey ere I reached the land of elephants.

A few minutes after this had occurred, another waggon meeting us from Somerset hove in sight, but shortly stuck fast within a quarter of a mile of us. Its owner, an Englishman, an Albany transport-rider or carrier, of the name of Leonard, now came up and requested me to lend him my oxen to assist him in his difficulties, which I did, he promising in return to help me out of mine; but it was not until unloaded of the entire cargo that they succeeded in extricating it; after which, with considerable trouble, they came up to us. We now

hooked on to my waggon both spans, amounting to twenty-six strong oxen, the drivers standing one on either side, with their whips ready at the given signal to descend upon the devoted oxen. I myself, with one of the Hot-tentots, armed with the jamboks, stood by the after-oxen, upon whom, in a dilemma of this sort, much depends. Every man and beast being at their post, the usual cry of "Trek, trek!" resounded on all sides, accompanied by a torrent of unearthly yells and abusive epithets; at the same time the whips were plied with energetic dexterity, and came down with startling reports on the backs of the oxen throughout all parts of the team. The twenty-six oxen, thus urged, at the same moment concentrated their energies, laying a mighty strain on the gear. Something *must* yield, and accordingly my powerful buffalo trektow snapped asunder within a few feet of the dissel-boom. The trektow being strongly knotted together, a second attempt was made, when it again snapped in a fresh place. We then unhooked the long drag-chains from beneath the waggon, wherewith having fortified the trektow, we made a third trial. The cunning oxen, having now twice exerted themselves in vain, and being well aware that the waggon was fast, according to their usual custom, could not be induced to make any further effort, notwithstanding the waggon-drivers had inflicted upon them about half an hour's terrific flogging, till the sides of half of them were running down with gore. In cases

of this sort the oxen, instead of taking properly to their work, spring about in the yoke, and turn their tails round where their heads should be, invariably snapping the straps and yoke-skeas, and frequently splitting the yokes. In the present instance my gear did not escape, for, after battling with the oxen till the sun went down, and smashing the half of my rheims, straps, and skeas, and splitting one of my yokes, we were obliged to drop it for the night. We cast loose the oxen, and, driving them up the hill-side, granted them their liberty until morning ; and leaving our broken gear, pickaxes, spades, and other utensils scattered about the ground in grand confusion, tired and worn out we kindled a fire, and set about cooking our dinner. Leonard and his servants declared that they had not tasted anything but a little biscuit and coffee during the last three days, the Dutchmen along their road being very unfriendly and inhospitable to the English transport-riders.

Next morning we awoke refreshed by sound slumbers, and having despatched all the Hottentots, excepting one man, in quest of the oxen, Leonard and I were actively employed for two hours in digging out and off-loading the waggon, after which Leonard and the Hottentot set about preparing the breakfast, whilst I proceeded to darn my worsted stockings, having had the good fortune to obtain some hanks of worsted from the wife of a Scotch serjeant in Grahamstown, after vainly seeking that article in the

shops of all the haberdashers in the town. While we were thus employed, Captain Codrington and Mr. Fichett rode up to us, and seemed very much amused at our situation. Having drunk a cup of coffee with me, Fichett and Codrington returned home, previously engaging me to dine with them, as I had resolved to retrace my steps and try another line of country. About eleven A.M. the Hottentots returned with our oxen, when, with the united efforts of the teams, we succeeded in extricating my now lightened waggon. The two oxen I purchased from Thompson, though well-favoured, proving indolent in a heavy pull, I exchanged them with Leonard for the liberty to pick any two out of his span, giving him a sovereign to boot. His team consisted of twelve tough little red Zoolah oxen, from the district of Natal, which, like the Albany cattle, are termed "Zuur-feldt." This colonial phrase is applied to all oxen bred and reared near the sea-coast, in districts where the majority of the grass is sour. Those from about the frontiers of the colony, or anywhere beyond the Orange River, are termed "Sweet-feldt" oxen. The Zuur-feldt cattle possess a superiority over the Sweet-feldt as trek-oxen, inasmuch as they thrive on any pasture, whereas the latter die if detained more than a few days in Zuur-feldt districts. Leonard's account of the road before me was so bad, his waggon having been upset four times on the preceding day, that I resolved to put about, and adopt the route through De

Bruin's Poort, which had been recommended to me by the drivers of the Somerset orange-waggon. By this route I should avoid Somerset, and pass through the village of Cradock. My plans at this time were, in the first instance, to proceed direct to the Thebus Flats, where black wildebeest and springbok were reported to abound; and thence to march upon Colesberg, a village on the frontiers, where I expected to meet my cousin Colonel Campbell, of the 91st, by whose advice, in a great measure, I intended to be guided in my future movements.

We now reloaded my waggon, made all fast, and, having put everything in order, Leonard and I journeyed together to Fichett's farm, where I once more took up my quarters for the night. While actively busied with my oxen, I saw to-day for the first time the honey-bird. This extraordinary little bird, which is about the size of a chaffinch, and of a light-grey colour, will invariably lead a person following it to a wild-bees' nest. Chattering and twittering in a state of great excitement, it perches on a branch beside the traveller, endeavouring by various wiles to attract his attention; and having succeeded in doing so, it flies lightly forward in a wavy course in the direction of the bees' nest, alighting every now and then, and looking back to ascertain if the traveller is following it, all the time keeping up an incessant twitter. When at length it arrives at the hollow tree, or deserted white-

ants' hill, which contains the honey, it for a moment hovers over the nest, pointing to it with its bill, and then takes up its position on a neighbouring branch, anxiously awaiting its share of the spoil. When the honey is taken, which is accomplished by first stupifying the bees by burning grass at the entrance of their domicile, the honey-bird will often lead to a second and even to a third nest. The person thus following it ought to whistle. The savages in the interior, whilst in pursuit, have several charmed sentences which they use on the occasion. The wild-bee of Southern Africa exactly corresponds with the domestic garden-bee of England. They are very generally diffused throughout every part of Africa—bees'-wax forming a considerable part of the cargoes of ships trading to the Gold and Ivory Coasts, and the deadly district of Sierra Leone, on the western shores of Africa.

Interesting as the honey-bird is, and though sweet be the stores to which it leads, I have often had cause to wish it far enough, as, when following the warm "spoor" or track of elephants, I have often seen the savages, at moments of the utmost importance, resign the spoor of the beasts to attend to the summons of the bird. Sometimes, however, they are "sold," it being a well-known fact, both among the Hottentots and tribes of the interior, that they often lead the unwary pursuer to danger, sometimes guiding him to the midday retreat of a grizzly lion, or bringing him suddenly upon the den of the crouching

panther. I remember on one occasion, about three years later, when weary with warring against the mighty elephants and hippopotami which roam the vast forests and sport in the floods of the fair Limpopo, having mounted a pair of unwonted shot-barrels, I sought recreation in the humbler pursuit of quail-shooting. While thus employed, my attention was suddenly invited by a garrulous honey-bird, which pertinaciously adhered to me for a considerable time, heedless of the reports made by my gun. Having bagged as many quails and partridges as I cared about shooting, I whistled lustily to the honey-bird, and gave him chase; after following him to a distance of upwards of a mile, through the open glades adjoining the Limpopo, he led me to an unusually vast crocodile, who was lying with his entire body concealed, nothing but his horrid head being visible above the surface of the water, his eyes anxiously watching the movements of eight or ten large bull-buffaloes, which, in seeking to quench their thirst in the waters of the river, were crackling through the dry reeds as they cautiously waded in the deep mud that a recent flood had deposited along the edge. Fortunately for the buffaloes, the depth of the mud prevented their reaching the stream, and thus the scaly monster of the river was disappointed of his prey.

CHAPTER III.

Fearful Descent of De Bruin's Poort — District lately deserted by Elephants — Noble Forest-trees — The Great Fish River — Cunning Boers — Burning effects of the Sun — The Dutch Noë's Green Tea Ointment — Skill of the Hottentots in "Tapping the Admiral" — Beautifully Wooded Country — The Village of Cradock — South African Climate — Countless Herds of Springbok — Mynheer Pocheter — The way to make a Friend on the Thebus Flats — Hendrick Strydom — Hunting for Springbok — Extraordinary Migrations of these Antelopes.

My trektow having been destroyed during the recent struggles, I was glad to purchase a new one from a man named Mackenzie in Fichett's employ, which he supplied me, together with a strong thornwood yoke, for 1*l*. On leaving the farm we proceeded in an easterly course, and struck into a track which in a few hours led us into the high road leading from Grahamstown to Cradock. Having followed this road for several miles, we commenced descending through the De Bruin's Poort, where the road winds, in a deep, narrow, and rugged ravine, through dense evergreen underwood, in its descent to the lower ground adjacent to the banks of the Great Fish River. This poort, or mountain pass, the terror of waggon-

drivers, being at all times perilous to waggons, was in the present instance unusually dangerous and impassable, the recent heavy rains having entirely washed away the loose soil with which the colonists had been in the habit of em-banking the permanent shelves and ridges of adamantine rock over which the waggons must necessarily pass, while they had at the same time undermined an immense number of large masses of rocks and stones which had hitherto occupied positions on the banks above, and which now lay scattered along the rocky way, presenting an apparently insurmountable barrier to our further progress.

As we were the first who had travelled this road since the late inundations, it had not undergone the slightest repair, which, to have done properly, would have required the labour of a week. Having halted the waggon, and descended into the ravine for an inspection, accompanied by Kleinboy, I at once pronounced it, in its present state, to be impassable. Kleinboy, however, well aware that he would not be called upon to pay for damages, seemed to entertain a different opinion, evidently preferring to run all risks to encountering the Herculean labours of rolling all these boulders to one side. Accordingly, having made up our minds to take the pass, we re-ascended to the waggon, and, having reined or secured the two hind wheels by means of the drag-chains, Kleinboy took his position on the box, and the waggon commenced its perilous descent, I following, in the firm

expectation every moment of beholding its destruction. Jolting furiously along, it crashed and jumped from rock to rock ; at one moment the starboard hind wheel resting on a projecting ledge of rock several feet in height, and the front wheel on the same side buried in a deep hollow, and next moment the larboard wheels suddenly elevated by a corresponding mass of rock on the opposite side, placing the waggon in such a position that it seemed as though another inch must inevitably decide its fate. I held my breath, doubting the possibility of its regaining the horizontal position. Righting again, however, with fearful violence it was launched, tottering from side to side, down the steep stony descent, and eventually, much to my astonishment, the pass was won, and we entered upon the more practicable road beneath.

I could not help fancying how an English-built vehicle would have fared in a similar situation, and how a Brighton coachman would have opened his eyes could he have seen my Cape waggon in the act of descending this fine specimen of a colonial waggon-road, which I might aptly compare to the rugged mountain-bed of some Highland river. Having continued our journey till within an hour of sundown, we encamped for the night. The country through which we had passed was densely covered with one vast jungle of dwarfish evergreen shrubs and bushes, amongst which the speck-boom was predominant. This species of tree, which is one of the most abundant through-

out the forests and jungles of Albany and Caffraria, is utterly unserviceable to man, as its pithy branches, even when dead, are unavailable for fuel. It is, however, interesting, as constituting a favourite food of the elephants which, about twenty-five years ago, frequented the whole of this country in large herds. The footpaths formed through successive ages, by the feet of these mighty animals, are still discernible on the sides and in the necks of some of the forest-clad hills; and the skulls and larger bones of many are at this moment bleaching in some of the forest-kloofs or ravines adjacent to the sea in Lower Albany.

From time immemorial these interesting and stupendous quadrupeds had maintained their ground throughout these their paternal domains, although they were constantly hunted, and numbers of them were slain, by the neighbouring active and athletic warriors of the Amaponda tribes, on account of their flesh—the ivory so much prized among civilized nations being by them esteemed of no value, the only purpose to which they adapt it being the manufacture of rings and ornaments for their fingers and arms. These gallant fellows, armed only with their assegais, or light javelins of their own manufacture, were in the constant habit of attacking the gigantic animals, and overpowering them with the accumulated showers of their weapons. At length, however, when the white lords of the creation pitched their camps on the shores of Southern Africa, a more determined and

general warfare was waged against the elephants on account of their ivory, with the more destructive engines of ball and powder. In a few years, those who managed to escape from the hands of their oppressors, after wandering from forest to forest, and from one mountain-range to another, and finding that sanctuary there was none, turned their faces to the north-east, and trekked or migrated from their ancestral jungles to lands unknown. A small remnant, however, remained ; and these, along with a few buffaloes, koodoos, and one solitary black rhinoceros, still found shelter in the vast jungles of the Zuurberg and Addo bush as late as the commencement of 1849.

When the colonists first settled in Albany, they were in the habit of carrying on a very lucrative traffic with the chiefs of the neighbouring Amaponda tribes, from whom they obtained large quantities of ivory in barter for beads, brass wire, and other articles of little value.

Throughout the jungles of Albany and Caffraria, but more particularly in the deep kloofs and valleys, many varieties of noble forest-trees are found of considerable size and great beauty, several of which are much prized by the colonists on account of their excellence for waggon-work and house-building ; of these I may enumerate the yellow-wood tree, the wild cedar, the stink-wood tree, and the black and the white iron-wood tree. The two latter are remarkable for toughness and durability, and are much used in the axletrees of waggons. The primitive

system of wooden axletrees has of late years been superseded in some districts by patent iron ones; many, however, still use and prefer the old wooden axletrees, because waggons having those made of iron, in steep descents, run too freely after the team, to the injury of the two after-oxen; and, further, because a wooden axle, if broken, may be replaced in any remote part of the country; whereas a damaged iron axletree cannot be mended even by the skilful smiths throughout the towns and villages of the colony. The iron axles are especially apt to be broken in cold frosty mornings during the winter, when a waggon, immediately after being set in motion, has to pass through rough ground before the friction of the wheel has imparted to it a certain degree of heat.

On the following day a march of four hours brought us to the bank of the Great Fish River, having crossed an extensively open glade covered with several varieties of low shrubs and grasses and rough heather. Here for the first time I saw and shot the black koran, an excellent game-bird, allied to the bustards, so abundant throughout South Africa. Its weight corresponds with that of our old cock grouse; its legs and neck are long like those of the ostrich; its breast and back are grey, and its wings black and white. They are everywhere to be met with where the country is at all level and open: when disturbed they take wing and fly over the plain in circles, much after the manner of the green plover or peewit,

uttering a harsh grating cry. The best method of getting within range is to use a horse, and ride round them in a circle, gradually contracting it. To this open glade, whose name I have forgotten, the Nimrods about Grahamstown often resort, and indulge in the exciting sport of wild boar and porcupine hunting. This "chasse" is conducted on bright moonlight nights, with a gathering of rough strong dogs, the hunters being armed with a bayonet or spear, with which they despatch the quarry when brought to bay.

I found the Great Fish River, as I had anticipated, still flooded and impassable to waggons. It was, however, ebbing rapidly, and apparently would be fordable on the morrow. During the previous heavy rains, which were said not to have been equalled for twenty-seven years, it had risen to an immense height, and everywhere overflowed its banks. That part of the bank which formed the descent and ascent of the former waggon-road was, as a matter of course, entirely swept away, a steep wall on either side of the river remaining in its stead, flanked by a bank of deep and slimy mud. An immense deal of manual labour would consequently be necessary to form a road, by cutting down these walls, and clearing a channel through the mud, before a wagon could take the drift. Accordingly, the work being considerable, I thought the sooner we set about it the better ; so having cooked and partaken of a hot tiffin, we

cast loose the pickaxes, spades, and shovels, stripped to our shirts, and, half wading, half swimming, succeeded in crossing the river, where, having laboured hard till sundown, and constructed a famous piece of road, we considered our task on that side as completed. Early on the following morning we resumed our labours on our side of the river, and about ten A.M. our path was finished. A party of Boers now hove in sight with three waggons, which they outspanned on the opposite bank, and drove their oxen into the neighbouring hills to graze. Presently observing us preparing to inspan, they beckoned to me to hold a conference with them across the stream, the object of which was to endeavour to dissuade me from taking the drift until their oxen should return, under pretence of assisting us, but, in reality, fearing that we would stick fast, and that they should be *forced* to assist us, since, in the event of our waggon sticking before their oxen came up, they would be unable to pass us until we were extricated. I saw the move with half an eye, and instantly ordered my men to inspan with all possible despatch; when we got safely through the river and up the opposite bank, which was much more than I had anticipated.

It was a fearful pull for the poor oxen; the waggon stuck fast three times, and was within a hair's breadth of being upset. The water just came up to the bottom boards, but fortunately did not wet any part of the cargo. The Boers seemed much surprised at the success of our

venture, as they always entertain the idea that an Englishman's oxen must be inferior to theirs, but this idea is grossly erroneous, the reverse being invariably the case. A Boer will hardly ever flog his oxen when they require it, which, though it may shock the ear of my fair reader, my regard to truth compels me to state is indispensable, oxen being of a strange, stubborn disposition, perfectly different from horses. This, at a future period, I had cause to ascertain practically, when, forsaken by my followers on the borders of the Kalihari desert, I was necessitated daily to inspan and drive my own oxen, which I did, with the assistance of a small Bushman, for a distance of about a thousand miles.

It is a common thing to see a Boer's oxen stick fast on a very moderate ascent, with not above 1000 lbs. or 2000 lbs. weight in the waggon, where an Albany transport-rider would pass him with a load of 6000 lbs. behind his bullocks; and it is by no means uncommon to see these Albany men discharging a load of even 8000 lbs. weight at the stores of the Grahamstown merchants, which they have transported with a team of fourteen oxen through the hilly country betwixt that town and Algoa Bay. After crossing the river, the road continued good for about three miles, but after that we found it washed away in many places. Once we stuck fast, and were obliged to dig the waggon out, and broke our trektow three times in extricating it. In other places we were

obliged to leave the usual road, and cut a new way through the thorny trees with our axes, the road being cut up with watercourses six and eight feet deep. At midday we outspanned for two hours, to rest the oxen, on the farm of a Mr. Corrie. Here we met a "smouse," or trader, coming down the country with a drove of about a hundred and fifty very large well-conditioned oxen. He offered me a span at 3*l.* a head; they were worth 12*l.* each in England. I felt the sun rather oppressive.

About two P.M. we inspanned, and, having ascended a long and very steep hill, we entered upon a new line of country, of wide undulating open plains of rank waving grass, dotted over with the mud-built habitations of white ants. We held on for three hours after sundown, and halted for the night at an uninhabited dilapidated mansion, in which we lighted a fire and cooked our dinner. Having secured our oxen on the yokes, instead of permitting them to graze during the night, we were enabled to march next morning some time before the break of day; and as the rising sun gradually unveiled the landscape, I had the pleasure of beholding for the first time several small herds of springboks scattered over the plain. This exquisitely graceful and truly interesting antelope is very generally diffused throughout Southern Africa, and is more numerous there than any other variety; it is very nearly allied to the ariel gazelle of Northern Africa, and in its nature and habits reminded me of the saisin of

India. A few herds of springboks are still to be met with on the plains in the district of Somerset, on which I had now entered ; but as this is one of the nearest districts to the abodes of men where this species remains, it is of course much hunted, and is annually becoming scarcer. The gentlemen farmers of the surrounding districts keep a good breed of greyhounds, with which they have excellent sport in pursuing these antelopes. On beholding the springboks I instantly directed my two horses to be saddled, and, desiring the Hottentots to proceed to a farm in advance and there outspan, I rode forth with Cobus, taking my two-grooved rifle to endeavour to obtain a shot. I found them extremely wild, and after expending a considerable deal of ammunition, firing at distances of from six to eight hundred yards, I rejoined my waggons, which I found drawn up on a Dutchman's farm, and left the antelopes scathless.

Owing to exposure to the sun while working at the Fish River drift on the preceding days, and also to having discarded coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth since leaving Grahamstown, my arms, neck, and shoulders were much swollen and severely burnt and blistered, causing me much pain, and at night preventing me from sleeping. The kind-hearted noë, or lady of the farm, commiserating my condition, and wishing to alleviate my pain, informed me that she had an excellent recipe for sunburn, which she had often successfully administered to her husband and sons.

One of the chief ingredients of the promised balsam was green tea, which was to be reduced to powder, of which she directed me to send her a little by one of my servants. I do not know what the other components might have been, but I well know that, on applying the ointment to the raw and swollen parts, it stung me as though it had been a mixture of salt and vinegar, giving me intense pain, and causing me to hop and dance about like one demented, and wish the Boer noë and her ointment in the realms of Pluto, to the infinite delight and merriment of my sympathising Hottentots.

A peculiar expression in the eyes of these gentlemen, and their general demeanour, inclined me to think that their potations had consisted of some more generous beverage than water during the morning's march ; and on examining one of my liquor-cases, I found that I was minus a bottle and a half of gin since yesterday.¹

¹ This is a common failing among this monkey-faced race, nineteen in every twenty Hottentots being drunkards, and they have, moreover, not the slightest scruple of conscience as to who is the lawful proprietor of the liquor, so long as they can get access to it. No locks nor bolts avail ; and thus on the Bay-road, the high road between Algoa Bay and Grahamstown, a constant system of tapping the admiral is maintained. In this pursuit these worthies, from long practice, have arrived at considerable skill, and it is usually accomplished in the following manner :—If the liquor is in a cask, having removed one of the hoops, a gimlet is inserted, when, a bucket or two of spirit having been drawn off, the aperture is filled with a plug, and, the hoop being replaced, no

After breakfast we continued our march, when I was again tempted to saddle up and give chase to a troop of springboks, one of which I shot : we continued our march until sundown, when we halted beside a pool of rain-water. Here we found some young Boers and Hottentots, belonging to a neighbouring farm, actively employed in digging out a nest of wild bees ; several of them had their eyes nearly closed from the stings which they had received. The spoils of the "bike," however, repaid their pains by twenty pounds of honey. On approaching the nest a large cluster of bees chose my sunburnt arm as a place of rendezvous, from which I could not remove them until I had obtained a bunch of burning grass.

Our march on the following day lay through a mountainous country, and no outward mark is visible. The liquor thus stolen, if missed, and inquiries issued, is very plausibly set down to the score of leakage. A great deal of gin arrives in Grahamstown in square case-bottles, packed in slight red wooden cases. To these the Hottentots devote marked attention, owing to the greater facility of getting at them. Having carefully removed the lid and drained several of the bottles, either by drinking them or pouring their contents into the water-casks belonging to the waggons, they either replace the liquor with water and repack the case again as they found it, or else they break the bottles which they have drained and replace them in the case, at the same time taking out a quantity of the chaff in which they had been packed. This is done to delude the merchant into the idea that the loss of liquor occurred owing to breakage from original bad packing. The risk and damage entailed on the proprietors of waggons and owners of merchandise from the drivers indulging in such a system, on the precarious roads of the colony, may be imagined.

tainous country abounding with rich pasture, covered in many places with picturesque thorny-mimosa trees, detached and in groups, imparting to the country the appearance of an English park. In the forenoon we halted for a couple of hours in a broad well-wooded hollow, where I found abundance of bustard, guinea-fowl, black koran, partridge, and quail. At sundown we encamped at a place called Daka-Boer's Neck, on high ground, where the road crosses a bold precipitous mountain-range. The mountain-road, along which we trekked the following morning, was extremely steep and rugged: on my right, high above me, I observed a herd of upwards of a hundred horses, consisting chiefly of brood mares and their foals, pasturing on the hill-side. Three more marches brought us to the village of Craddock, which we reached at dawn of day on Saturday morning the 2nd of October, having twice again had occasion to cross the Great Fish River.

The country through which we passed was bold, mountainous, and barren, excepting along the banks of the river, which were adorned with groves of mimosa, willow, and whitethorn, clad with a profusion of rich yellow blossoms yielding a powerful and fragrant perfume. It was now the spring of the year, and, this season having been peculiarly favoured with rains, a vernal freshness robbed these sometimes arid regions, and I consider that I first saw them under very favourable circumstances.

On the northern bank, at one of the drifts where we crossed the Fish River, I observed the dry dung in an old sheep-kraal burning. It was smouldering away after the manner of Scotch peat; and on my return from the interior about eighteen months after, on my way to Grahamstown, the dunghill was still burning, and had been burning all the time, and nevertheless only two-thirds were consumed. The immense time which these dunghills require to burn is very singular. It is quite a common occurrence for one of them to burn for three or four years; and I have been informed by several respectable farmers of Lower Albany, on whose veracity I could rely, that in that district one of these "middens," as they are termed in Scotland, burnt for seven years before it was consumed. The heaviest and most protracted rains seem to affect them but little, rarely if ever extinguishing them.

Cradock is a pretty little village situated on the eastern bank of the Great Fish River, by which it is supplied with water and the gardens irrigated. It is inhabited by Dutch and English, and a goodly sprinkling of Hottentots, Mozambiques, and Fingoes. The principal street is wide and adorned with shady trees on every side, among which I observed lots of peach-trees covered with green fruit. The houses are large and well built, generally of brick, some in the old Dutch and some in the English style. Each house has got a con-

siderable garden attached to it: these are tastefully laid out and contain all the vegetables most used in an English kitchen. Apples, pears, oranges, quinces, nectarines, and grapes abound. The vision is bounded on every side by barren, arid, rocky hills and mountains. I marched right through the town and outspanned about a quarter of a mile beyond it, and after breakfast I re-entered the village on foot to purchase necessities for myself and servants. Numbers of Dutch Boers with their wives and families were assembling to hold their Nachmahl or sacrament.

About eleven A.M. we inspanned, and continued our journey about five miles, crossing the Great Fish River twice, when I halted for some hours upon its bank on account of my oxen, the grass in the vicinity of the town having been very bare. This was the fifth and last time that we crossed the Great Fish River. Here about a dozen waggons passed us on their way to Cradock, containing Dutch Boers with their fraus and families. Several of these were horse-waggon, drawn by eight and ten horses in each waggon, harnessed two abreast, and drawing by straps across their breasts instead of collars. These straps are generally manufactured of the skin of the lion when it is to be obtained, that being reckoned by the Boers to be tougher and more enduring than any other. These long teams are well managed and dexterously driven by the Boers, one man holding the reins

and another the whip. In the afternoon I again inspanned, and continued my march till sundown. The road since I left Cradock had improved, and was now fine and level, leading through a wide, open, undulating strath along the north-eastern bank of the Fish River. The surrounding country presented in every direction endless chains of barren stony mountains; the bold range of the Rhinaster Bergs standing forth in grand relief to the westward; not a tree to be seen, except a few thorny mimosas in some of the more favoured hollows of the hills and along the banks of the river; the country covered with grass and heaths, dwarfish shrubs, and small thorny bushes.

The sun during the day was powerful, but a cool breeze prevailed from the south. Ever since I left Grahamstown the weather had been very pleasant, and seldom oppressively hot, saving in the low-lying hollows where the breezes are not felt. South Africa, though its climate is dry and sultry, is nevertheless very salubrious, being surrounded on three sides by the sea, off which a healthy breeze prevails throughout the greater part of the year. At certain seasons, however, northerly breezes prevail: these are termed by the colonists "hot winds." On these occasions the wind feels as though it were blowing off a furnace in a glass-foundry, being heated in its passage over the burning sands of the Great Kalahari desert.

In Cradock I engaged another Hottentot, named Jacob, in the capacity of after-rider. Having followed the course of the Fish River for a distance of about nine miles, our road inclined to the right in a more northerly direction, and we here bade that stream a final adieu. Two more marches through a succession of wide, undulating, sterile plains, bounded on all sides by bleak and barren mountains, brought us to the borders of the immense flats surrounding the Thebus Mountain.

Having followed along the eastern bank an insignificant little stream dignified by the appellation of the Brak River, I arrived at the farm of Mynheer Besta, a pleasant hospitable Boer, and a field-cornet of the district, which means a sort of resident magistrate. Here we halted to breakfast, and Besta, who is a keen sportsman, entertained me with various anecdotes and adventures which had occurred to him during the earlier days of his sporting career in Albany, where he had once resided. He informed me that the black wildebeest and springbok were extremely numerous on the plains immediately beyond his farm, which made me resolve to saddle up and go in quest of them as soon as I had breakfasted. The flesh of these animals forms one of the chief articles of food among the Boers and their servants who inhabit the districts in which they are abundant; and the skulls and horns of hundreds of black wildebeest and springbok were to be seen piled in

heaps and scattered about the outhouses of the farm. Adjoining the house was a well-watered garden with very green trees and corn in it, which formed a most pleasing contrast with the surrounding barren country.

Having directed my men to proceed to the next farm along the banks of the Brak River, I rode forth with Cobus and held a northerly course across the flats. I soon perceived herds of springbok in every direction, which, on my following at a hard gallop, continued to join one another until the whole plain seemed alive with them. Upon our crossing a sort of ridge on the plain I beheld the whole country as far as my eye could reach actually white with springboks, with here and there a herd of black gnoos or wildebeest, prancing and capering in every direction, whirling and lashing their white tails as they started off in long files on our approach. Having pursued them for many hours, and fired about a dozen shots at these and the springboks at distances of from four to six hundred yards, and only wounded one, which I lost, I turned my horse's head for camp. The evening set in dark and lowering, with rattling thunder and vivid flashes of lightning on the surrounding hills. I accordingly rode hard for my waggon, which I just reached in time to escape a deluge of rain which lasted all night. The Brak River came down a red foaming torrent, but fell very rapidly in the morning. This river is called Brak from the flavour of its waters, which,

excepting in the rainy season, are barely palatable. My day's sport, although unsuccessful, was most exciting. I did not feel much mortified at my want of success, for I was well aware that recklessly jaging after the game in the manner in which I had been doing, although highly exhilarating, was not the way to fill the bag. Delight at beholding so much noble game in countless herds on their native plains was uppermost in my mind, and I felt that at last I had reached the borders of those glorious hunting-lands the accounts of which had been my chief inducements to visit this remote and desolate corner of the globe; and I rejoiced that I had not allowed the advice of my acquaintances to influence my movements.

As I rode along in the intense and maddening excitement of the chase, I felt a glad feeling of unrestrained freedom, which was common to me during my career in Africa, and which I had seldom so fully experienced; and notwithstanding the many thorns which surrounded my roses during the many days and nights of toil and hardship which I afterwards encountered, I shall ever refer to those times as by far the brightest and happiest of my life. On the following morning I rode through the Brak River to visit Mynheer Pocheter, with the intention of buying some horses from him, but he had none to dispose of. I met the old fellow coming in from the "feldt," with his long single-barrelled roer and enormous

flint-lock, with the usual bullock's horn powder-flask dangling at his side. He had gone out with his Hottentot before the dawn of day, and taken up a position in a little neck in an uneven part of the plain, through which the springboks were in the habit of passing before sunrise. In places of this description the Boers build little watching-places with flat stones, from which they generally obtain a shot every morning and evening, and at such distances as to insure success. To use their own words, "they secure a buck from these places, skot for skot," meaning a buck for every shot. On this occasion, however, our friend had been unfortunate, returning without venison, although I had heard the loud booming of his "roer" a short time previously. The report made by these unwieldy guns of the Boers, charged with a large handful of coarse gunpowder, is to be heard at an amazing distance through the calm atmosphere of these high table-lands; and during my stay on the flats adjoining Thebus Mountain, scarcely an hour elapsed at morning, noon, or eve, but the distant booming of some Dutchman's gun saluted the ear.

Mynheer Pocheter asked me in to take some breakfast with him, which I did, Cobus acting as interpreter, mine host not understanding a word of English, and I not having at that time acquired the Dutch language, with which I not long afterwards became thoroughly conversant. After breakfast I took leave of Mynheer Pocheter, and

having directed the waggon to strike out of the direct road to Colesberg, and hold across country to the abode of a Boer named Hendrick Strydom, where the game was represented to me as being extremely plentiful, I again rode forth, accompanied by Cobus, to wage war with the springboks. We pricked over the plain, holding an easterly course, and found, as yesterday, the springboks in thousands, with here and there a herd of black wildebeest. Finding that by jaging on the open plain I could not get within four or five hundred yards of them, I left my horses and after-rider, and set off on foot to a low range of rocky hills, where I performed two difficult stalks upon a springbok and a wildebeest, both of which I wounded severely, but lost. When stalking in upon the springbok I took off my shoes, and had very great difficulty in finding them again. I experienced great distress from thirst. The sun was very powerful, and, notwithstanding the heavy rains of the preceding evening, a drop of water was nowhere to be found.

In the afternoon I came to a pool of mud ; the little water it contained was almost boiling ; I was, however, most thankful to find it, and tears of delight came into my eyes on discovering it. How trifling was this to the trials from thirst which I have often since undergone ! Shortly after this I fell in with my servant, who, astonished at my long absence, had come in search of me with the horses. I was right glad to fall in with him, and, having got into

the saddle, I rode hard across the plain for my waggon. On my way thither I took up a position behind a ridge, and directed Cobus to "jag" a herd of springbok towards me, which he did most successfully, sending upwards of a hundred of them right in my teeth. I however was still unfortunate, firing both barrels into the herd without doing any apparent injury. On reaching my waggon, which I found outspanned at the desolate abode of Mynheer Hendrick Strydom, I took a mighty draught of gin and water, and then walked, followed by my interpreter carrying a bottle of Hollands and glasses, to the door of Strydom, to cultivate the acquaintance of himself and frau, and wearing the garb of old Gaul, in which I generally hunted during my first expedition, to the intense surprise of the primitive Boers. Shaking Strydom most cordially by the hand, I told him that I was a "Berg Scott," or mountain Scotchman, and that it was the custom in my country, when friends met, to pledge one another in a bumper of spirits; at the same time, suiting the action to the word, I filled him a brimming bumper. This was my invariable practice on first meeting a Boer. I found it a never-failing method of gaining his good-will, and he always replied that the Scotch were the best people in the world.

It is a strange thing that Boers are rather partial to Scotchmen, although they detest the sight of an Englishman. They have an idea that the Scotch, like themselves,

were a nation conquered by the English, and that, consequently, we trek in the same yoke as themselves ; and further, a number of their ministers are Scotchmen. Hendrick Strydom was a tall, sunburnt, wild-looking creature, with light, sandy hair, and a long, shaggy red beard. He was a keen hunter, and himself and household subsisted, in a great measure, by the proceeds of his long single-barrelled "roer." His frau was rather a nice little woman, with a fresh colour, and fine dark eyes and eyebrows ; and displayed her good taste by taking a fancy to me, but perhaps the tea and coffee which she found I bestowed with a liberal hand might account for her partiality. These were Boers of the poorer order, and possessed but little of this world's goods. Their abode was in keeping with their means. It was a small mud cottage, with a roof which afforded scanty protection from the heavy periodical rains. The fire burnt on the hearthstone, and a hole in the roof served at once for a window and chimney. The rafters and bare mud walls were adorned with a profusion of skins of wild animals, and endless festoons of "biltongue" or sun-dried flesh of game. Green fields or gardens there were none whatever ; the wild Karroo plain stretched away from the house on all sides ; and during the night the springboks and wildebeests pastured before the door.

The servants consisted of one old Bushman and his wife, and the whole of their worldly possessions were an

old waggon, a span of oxen, a few milk cows, and a small herd of goats and sheep. Strydom's revenue seemed principally to be obtained by manufacturing ashes, with which he was in the habit of loading up his waggon and trekking many days' journey into other districts, where he sold them to richer Boers.¹ These ashes are in great demand amongst all the Boers, as being an indispensable ingredient in the manufacture of soap. Every Boer in South Africa makes his own soap. There is a low, succulent, green bush from which the ashes are obtained, which is only found in certain districts, and in these desolate plains it was very abundant.

Strydom, having sympathised with me on my continued run of ill luck, remarked that it was quite a common thing when "jaging" on the principle which I had followed. He said that he was aware that in hunting on that system an immense amount of ammunition was expended with little profit, and that he, being a poor man, very rarely indulged in it; but that if I would accompany him after I had taken my coffee, there being still about two hours of daylight, he would show me his method, and he thought it very probable that we should get a buck

¹ The manner of obtaining this ash is first to dig up the bushes and collect them on the plains. There they are left until sufficiently dry to burn, when, a calm day being selected, they are set on fire, and the ashes are collected and stowed away in large sacks made of the raw skins of wildebeests and zebras, when they are fit for immediate use.

that evening. Accordingly, having partaken of coffee, Strydom and I stalked forth together across the wild and desolate-looking plain, followed by two Hottentots, large herds of graceful springboks pasturing on every side. He placed me behind a small green bush, about eighteen inches in height, upon a wide open flat, instructing me to lie flat on my breast ; and having proceeded some hundred yards, and taken up a similar position, he sent the Hottentots round a herd of springboks which were feeding on the plain, to endeavour to move them gently towards us. It was a very beautiful thing altogether, and succeeded well. The whole herd came on slowly, right towards where I lay, until within a hundred yards, when I selected a fine fat buck, which I rolled over with a ball in the shoulder. This was the first fair shot that I had obtained at a springbok on these plains. I have always been reckoned by those who know my shooting to be a very fair rifle-shot, whether standing or running, but I do not profess to make sure work much beyond one hundred and ten paces, or thereabouts.¹

¹ The springbok is so termed by the colonists on account of its peculiar habit of springing or taking extraordinary bounds, rising to an incredible height in the air, when pursued. The extraordinary manner in which springboks are capable of springing is best seen when they are chased by a dog. On these occasions away start the herd, with a succession of strange perpendicular bounds, rising with curved loins high into the air, and at the same time elevating the snowy folds of long white hair on their haunches and

Two days before this, I brought down a koran flying, with single ball. Our chances for this evening being now

along their back, which imparts to them a peculiar fairy-like appearance, different from any other animal. They bound to the height of ten or twelve feet, with the elasticity of an India-rubber ball, clearing at each spring from twelve to fifteen feet of ground, without apparently the slightest exertion. In performing the spring, they appear for an instant as if suspended in the air, when down come all four feet again together, and, striking the plain, away they soar again as if about to take flight. The herd only adopt this motion for a few hundred yards, when they subside into a light elastic trot, arching their graceful necks and lowering their noses to the ground, as if in sportive mood. Presently pulling up, they face about, and reconnoitre the object of their alarm. In crossing any path or waggon-road on which men have lately trod, the springbok invariably clears it by a single surprising bound; and when a herd of perhaps many thousands have to cross a track of the sort, it is extremely beautiful to see how each antelope performs this feat, so suspicious are they of the ground on which their enemy, man, has trodden. They bound in a similar manner when passing to leeward of a lion, or any other animal of which they entertain an instinctive dread.

The accumulated masses of living creatures which the springboks exhibit on the greater migrations is utterly astounding, and any traveller witnessing it as I have, and giving a true description of what he has seen, can hardly expect to be believed, so marvellous is the scene.

They have been well and truly compared to the wasting swarms of locusts, so familiar to the traveller in this land of wonders. Like them they consume every green thing in their course, laying waste vast districts in a few hours, and ruining in a single night the fruits of the farmer's toil. The course adopted by the antelopes is generally such as to bring them back to their own country by a route different from that by which they set out. Thus their line of march sometimes forms something like a vast oval, or an

over, and night setting in, I returned to the farm with Strydom in high spirits.

extensive square, of which the diameter may be some hundred miles, and the time occupied in this migration may vary from six months to a year.



CHAPTER IV.

A Bustard shot — Flight of Locusts — Quagga Shooting in the Dark — Curious Mistake — Ostriches — A Sportsman napping — Leave Strydom's Residence in quest of Wildebeests — Wildebeest Shooting — Meeting with a Brother Officer — Proceed to Colesberg — Additions to Equipments.

AT an early hour on the morning of the 6th, while I was yet in bed, Hendrick Strydom and his frau were standing over my fire, alongside of my waggon, with a welcome supply of sweet milk, and hurrying on the indolent Hottentots to prepare my breakfast, and rouse their slothful master—the earliest dawn being, as he affirmed, the best time to go after the springboks. On hearing their voices I rose, and, having breakfasted, we shouldered our “roers,” walked about a mile across the plain, and took up positions behind two very low bushes, about three hundred yards apart, and instructed our Hottentots to endeavour to drive the springboks towards us. We had two beats, but were unlucky both times, each of us wounding and losing a springbok. In the evening we went out again to hunt on the same principle, on a very wide flat to the west of his house, where we lay down be-

hind very low bushes, in the middle of the bucks. We lay there on our breasts for two hours, with herds of springboks moving all round us, our Hottentots manœuvring in the distance. One small troop came within shot of me, when I sent my bullet spinning through a graceful doe, which bounded forward a hundred yards, and, staggering for a moment, fell over and expired. A little after this, I suddenly perceived a large paow or bustard walking on the plain before me. These birds are very wary and difficult to approach. I therefore resolved to have a shot at him, and lay like a piece of rock until he came within range, when I sent a bullet through him. He managed, however, to fly about a quarter of a mile, when he alighted; and on going up to the place half an hour after, I found him lying dead, with his head stuck into a bush of heath.

Strydom had two family shots, and brought down with each a well-conditioned buck. In high good-humour with our success, we now proceeded to gralloch or disembowel the quarry; after which, each of us shouldering a buck, we returned home in heavy marching order. On the following day I had the pleasure of beholding the first flight of locusts that I had seen since my arrival in the colony. We were standing in the middle of a plain of unlimited length, and about five miles across, when I observed them advancing. On they came like a snow-storm, flying slow and steady, about a hundred yards

from the ground. I stood looking at them until the air was darkened with their masses, while the plain on which we stood became densely covered with them. Far as my eye could reach—east, west, north, and south—they stretched in one unbroken cloud; and more than an hour elapsed before their devastating legions had swept by. I was particularly struck with this most wonderful and truly interesting sight; and I remember at the time my feeling was one of self-gratulation at having visited a country where I could witness such a scene. On this day and on the morrow Strydom and I continued to wage successful war against the springboks. We crossed the small stream called the Thebus River, and hunted on the plains to the east. On one occasion Hendrick brought down two fat bucks at one shot, which he assured me was not an uncommon event with him.

On the morning of the 9th, Strydom and I having resolved over night to go in quest of a troop of ostriches which his Hottentot reported, frequenting the plains immediately adjacent to the Thebus Mountain, we started our Hottentots two hours before the dawn of day; and after an early breakfast we saddled up, and rode direct for the Thebus Mountain. This remarkable mountain, which I shall ever remember as the leading feature on the plains where I first really commenced my African hunting, is of peculiar shape, resembling a cone depressed at the apex, and surmounted by a round tower. It is

also remarkable as being considerably higher than the surrounding mountains, with which the plains are bounded and intersected. As we rode along, a balmy freshness prevailed the morning air. We passed through herds of thousands of springboks, with small herds of wildebeest scattered amongst them. I fired two or three very long shots without success. Strydom, however, was more fortunate. He fired into a herd of about a hundred bucks at three hundred yards, and hit one fine old buck right in the middle of the forehead, the ball passing clean through his skull. We hid him in a hole in the ground, and covered him with bushes, and then rode on to our Hottentots, whom we found waiting beside a small fountain in a pass formed by a wide gap in a low range of hills situated between two extensive plains which were thickly covered with game. I took up my position in a bush of rushes in the middle of the pass, and remained there for upwards of eight hours, during which our boys were supposed to be endeavouring to drive the game towards us.

The Boer took up the best pass about a quarter of a mile to my right. Before we had been an hour at our passes, the boys drove up four beautiful ostriches, which came and stood within fifty yards of Strydom, but, alas! he was asleep. About this time I was busy trying to remember and practise a childish amusement which once delighted me as much as rifle-shooting—namely, making

a cap of rushes—when, on suddenly lifting up my eyes, I saw standing within eighty yards of me about a dozen beautiful springboks, which were coming up to the pass behind me. I snatched up my rifle, and, lying flat on my breast, I sent a bullet through the best buck in the troop, smashing his shoulder. He ran about fifty yards, and fell dead. I unfortunately left him lying exposed in the pass, the consequence of which was that three other troops of springboks, which were coming up as he had come, were turned to the right-about by his carcase.

It was amusing to see the birds and beasts of prey assembling to dispute the carcase with me. First came the common black and white carrion-crow, then the vultures; the jackals knew the cry of the vultures, and they too came sneaking from their hiding-places in the rocks and holes of the ant-bear in the plains, to share in the feast, whilst I was obliged to remain a quiet spectator, not daring to move, as the game was now in herds on every side of me, and I expected to see ostriches every moment. Presently a herd of wildebeest came thundering down upon me, and passed within shot. I put a bullet into one of these, too far behind the shoulder, which, as is always the case with deer and antelopes, did not seem to affect him in the slightest degree. In the afternoon we altered our positions, and sent the boys to drive the plain beside which I had been sitting all day. The quantity of bucks which were now before our eyes

beat all computation. The plain extended, without a break, until the eye could not discern any object smaller than a castle. Throughout the whole of this extent were herds of thousands and tens of thousands of springboks, interspersed with troops of wildebeest. The boys sent us one herd of about three hundred springboks, into which Strydom let fly at about three hundred yards, and turned them and all the rest.

It was now late in the day, so we made for home, taking up the buck which Strydom had shot in the morning. As we cantered along the flats, Strydom, tempted by a herd of springboks, which were drawn up together in a compact body, jumped off his horse, and, giving his ivory sight an elevation of several feet, let drive at them, the distance being about five hundred yards. As the troop bounded away, we could distinguish a light-coloured object lying in the short heath, which he pronounced to be a springbok, and on going up we found one fine old doe lying dead, shot through the spine. This day, and every day since I arrived at these flats, I was astonished at the number of skeletons and well-bleached skulls with which the plains were covered. Thousands of skulls of springbok and wildebeest were strewed around wherever the hunter turned his eye. The sun was extremely powerful all day, but, being intent on the sport, I did not feel it, until I found my legs burnt; my dress as usual was the kilt, with a grey stalking cap. On reaching home the following day,

a large party of natives, belonging to the chief Moshesh, arrived on the farm. These poor men were travelling in quest of employment. Numbers of natives annually visit the colony, and work for the Boers, making stone enclosures for their cattle, and large dams or embankments across little streams in the mouths of valleys, for the purpose of collecting water in the rainy season, for the supply of their flocks and herds during the protracted droughts of summer. They are paid for their labour with young cows or she-goats. The recent rains having washed away the embankment of a dam situated in a distant range of hills, on the borders of the farm, Strydom engaged these men to repair it. The vicinity of the dam being a favourite haunt for quaggas, and it being necessary that Strydom should go there on the morrow, we resolved to hunt in the neighbouring district, in which were situated some high and rugged hills. Accordingly next day we sallied forth, and I ascended to one of their highest pinnacles, where I managed to shoot a rhode-raebok. Joining Strydom shortly afterwards, we hunted over another range of the same hills, where we fell in with three quaggas and other game. Night was now fast setting in, so we descended from the hills, and made for home. Cantering along, we observed what we took to be a herd of quaggas and a bull wildebeest standing in front of us, upon which we jumped off our horses, and, bending our bodies, approached them to fire.

It was now quite dark, and it was hard to tell what sort of game we were going to fire at. Strydom, however, whispered to me that they were quaggas, and they certainly appeared to be such. His gun snapped three times at the wildebeest, upon which they all set off at a gallop. Strydom, who was riding my stallion, let go his bridle when he ran in to fire, taking advantage of which the horse set off at a gallop after them. I then mounted "The Cow," and after riding hard for about a mile I came up to them. They were now standing still, and the stallion was in the middle of them. I could make him out by his saddle ; so, jumping off my horse in a state of intense excitement, I ran forward and fired both barrels of my two-grooved rifle into the quaggas, and heard the bullets tell loudly. They then started off, but the stallion was soon once more fighting in the middle of them. I was astonished and delighted to remark how my horse was able to take up their attention, so that they appeared heedless of the reports of my rifle.

In haste I commenced loading, but to my dismay I found that I had left my loading-rod with Hendrick. Mounting "The Cow," I rode nearer to the quaggas, and was delighted to find that they allowed my horse to come within easy shot. It was now very dark, but I set off in the hope to fall in with Hendrick on the wide plain, and galloped along shouting with all my might, but in vain. I then rode across the plain for the hill to try to find

some bush large enough to make a ramrod. In this, by the greatest chance, I succeeded, and, being provided with a knife, I cut a good ramrod, loaded my rifle, and rode off to seek the quaggas once more. I soon fell in with them, and, coming within shot, fired at them right and left, and heard both bullets tell, upon which they galloped across the plain with the stallion still after them. One of them, however, was very hard hit, and soon dropped astern. The stallion remained to keep him company.

About this time the moon shone forth faintly. I galloped on after the troop, and, presently coming up with them, rode on one side, and dismounting, and dropping on my knee, I sent a bullet through the shoulder of the last quagga; he staggered forward, fell to the ground with a heavy crash, and expired. The rest of the troop charged wildly around him, snorting and prancing like the wild horses in Mazeppa, and then set off at full speed across the plain. I did not wait to bleed the quagga, but, mounting my horse, I galloped on after the troop, but could not, however, overtake them. I now returned and endeavoured to find the quagga which I had last shot, but owing to the darkness, and to my having no mark to guide me on the plain, I failed to find him. I then set off to try for the quagga which had dropped astern with the stallion; having searched some time in vain, I dismounted and laid my head on the ground, when I made out two dark objects which turned out to be what I sought. On

my approaching, the quagga tried to make off, when I sent a ball through his shoulder, which laid him low. On going up to him in the full expectation of inspecting for the first time one of these animals, what was my disappointment and vexation to find a fine brown gelding, with two white stars on his forehead ! The truth now flashed upon me ; Strydom and I had both been mistaken ; instead of quaggas, the waggon-team of a neighbouring Dutchman had afforded me my evening's shooting !

I caught my stallion and rode home, intending to pay for the horses which I had killed and wounded ; but on telling my story to Strydom, with which he seemed extremely amused, he told me not to say a word about it, as the owners of the horses were very avaricious, and would make me pay treble their value, and that if I kept quiet it would be supposed they had been killed either by lions or wild Bushmen. Strydom and I continued hunting springboks till the 17th, during which time we enjoyed a constant run of good luck, and so fascinating was the sport that I felt as though I never could tire of it. It was, indeed, a country where a person who loved rifle-shooting ought to have been content. Every morning, on opening my eyes, the first thing which I saw, without raising my head from the pillow, was herds of hundreds of springboks grazing before me on the plains. On the 17th an old friend of Strydom's, a Boer from Magalisberg, outspanned on the farm. He had been to Grahamstown with

a load of ivory, and was returning home with supplies of tea, coffee, clothing, &c., sufficient for two years' consumption. He was accompanied by his wife and two tall gawky-looking daughters, and half a dozen noisy geese which were secured in a cage on the trap of the waggon. This Boer informed me that I could get all the rarer animals, which I wished to shoot, in his vicinity, namely, sable antelope, roan antelope, eland, waterbuck, koodoo, pallah, elephant, black and white rhinoceros, hippopotamus, giraffe, buffalo, lion, &c. He told me he had shot elephants there with tusks weighing 100 lbs. each, and upwards of seven feet in length. He advised me not to visit that country before the end of April, as my horses would assuredly die of a never-failing distemper which prevails in the interior, within a certain latitude, during the summer months.

Being anxious now to devote my attention more particularly to black wildebeests, of which I had not yet secured a specimen, I resolved to take leave of my friend Hendrick Strydom, and proceed to the plains beyond the Thebus Mountain, where he informed me they abounded. Accordingly, about 9 P.M., having inspanned by moonlight, I took leave of my friend, having presented him with a coffee-mill and some crockery, to which his frau had taken a fancy, and also with a supply of coarse gunpowder, which is to a Boer a most acceptable gift. We held for the Thebus Mountain, steering across the open

plains and following no track, with springboks and wildebeests whistling and bellowing on every side of us. About midnight we halted by a fountain near the pass where a few days before I had lain in ambush for eight hours, and, as it was probable that the oxen would wander during the night, we secured them on the yokes. Two of my oxen and both my horses were reported missing when we left the farm, and I had left Cobus to seek for them.

In the afternoon of the next day my two servants joined me, bringing with them the lost oxen, but having failed to find the steeds. At night I took up a position in an old shooting-hole beside the vley, to watch for wildebeests. Several jackals, wildebeests, quaggas, and hyænas came to drink during the night, but, not being able to see the sight of my rifle, I did not fire. Here I remained until the bright star of morning had risen far above the horizon, and day was just beginning to dawn when, gently raising my head and looking round, I saw, on one side of me, four wildebeests, and on the other side ten. They were coming to drink ; slowly and suspiciously they approached the water, and, having convinced themselves that all was right, they trotted boldly up and commenced drinking. Selecting the finest bull, I fired, and sent a bullet through his shoulder, when, splashing through the water, he bounded madly forward, and, having run about a hundred yards, rolled over in the dewy grass. I did not show myself, other game being in

sight, but lay still in the hole. In about an hour an old springbok fed up to within three hundred yards of me, and continued browsing there for a considerable time. As no more wildebeests seemed to be approaching, and as I was very hungry, I put up my sight and took a cool, calculating aim at him, and sent the ball through the middle of his shoulder. I then left my hole, and, having inspected the wildebeest bull, which was a noble specimen, I walked up to my waggon and sent the boys to cut up the venison and preserve the head carefully.

On the following morning I woke as day dawned, and held for my hole beside the vley, but had not gone two hundred yards round the hillock when I saw an old springbok feeding, which I stalked, and broke his fore-leg. He went off towards the waggon, when the boys slipped "Gauger" (one of my greyhounds), who at once ran into him and pulled him down. Having lain about an hour at the vley, two old wildebeests approached up wind, and, suspecting the ground, described a wide semicircle, like our red-deer. I wounded one of them, but he did not drop. I however managed to send a ball through the shoulder of the other, when he ran several hundred yards, whisking his long white tail as if all right, and suddenly rolled over in full career. His skin had a delicious smell of the grass and wild herbs on which these animals lie and feed. On proceeding to my waggon, I found all my men asleep. Having gralloched the wildebeest, we bore

him bodily to the waggon on the "lechteruit," which is a bar of hard wood used in greasing the waggon-wheels, when I immediately set about curing the head, it being a very fine one.

On the following morning Cobus returned, having found my two horses. While taking my breakfast I observed a gentleman approaching on horseback; this was Mr. Paterson, an officer of the 91st., a detachment of which was then quartered at Colesberg. Lieutenant Borrow, a brother officer of mine, had intrusted me with the care of a rifle which he was sending to Mr. Paterson, and, as I had been a long time on the road, he had now come to look after it. He was a keen sportsman, and I had much pleasure in meeting so agreeable a person in the wilderness. Having joined me in my rough breakfast with a true hunter's appetite, we rode forth together to look for a wildebeest I had wounded in the morning, expecting to find him dead. On reaching the ground we found five small herds of wildebeests charging about the plain, and for a long time could not discover the wounded one; at length I perceived an old bull with his head drooping, which I at once pronounced to be my friend. On observing him we dismounted and watched him for a short time. The others inclined to make off, but seemed unwilling to leave him. Being now convinced that this was the wildebeest we sought, we determined to give him chase, and try to ride into him; but, just as we had come

to this resolution, he fell violently to the ground, raising a cloud of dust. On riding up to him we found him dead.

Paterson and I then made for the vley, and had not proceeded two hundred yards when, on looking back, I saw about thirty large vultures standing on the wildebeest, which in a very short space of time they would have devoured. On the morrow Paterson left me and rode back for Colesberg, having first extracted a promise that I would follow him within three days. I accordingly hunted until that time had expired, when I reluctantly inspanned and marched upon Colesberg. Three long marches brought us to the farm of a Boer named Penar, who had been recommended to me as having a good stamp of horses, and as being reasonable in his prices. I was however disappointed with his stud, and, finding him exorbitant in his prices, no business was transacted. The country continued much the same; wide Karroo plains, bounded by abrupt rocky mountains. One more long march brought us within five miles of Colesberg, where I halted for the night.

On the 27th, having taken an early breakfast, we trekked into Colesberg, where, having chosen a position for my camp, I outspanned and took up my quarters with Paterson. The village of Colesberg is so called from a conspicuous, lofty table-mountain in its immediate vicinity, which takes its name from a former governor of the colony. The town is situated in a con-

lined hollow, surrounded on all sides by low rocky hills. The formation of these rocks is igneous, and the way in which they are distributed is very remarkable. Large and shapeless masses are heaped together and piled one above another, as if by the hand of some mighty giant of the olden times. The town is well supplied with water from a strong fountain which bursts from the base of one of these rocky hillocks above the level of the town, and by which the small gardens adjoining the houses are irrigated. Abundance of water is the only advantage that the situation can boast of. In the town are several large stores, from which the Boers of the surrounding districts can obtain every necessary article in their domestic economy. Numbers of these farmers attend the market weekly with their waggons, bringing in the produce of their farms and gardens ; and, on sacramental occasions, which happen four times every year, the town is inundated with Boers, who bring in their families in horse-waggon. Owing to the unsettled state of the country, troops were then stationed at Colesberg. The garrison consisted of about two hundred men of the 91st, under command of my cousin Colonel Campbell, and one company of the Cape mounted Rifles, commanded by Captain Donovan. Colesberg was in those days a pleasant quarter, as there was not much pipeclay, and very good shooting could be obtained within a few hours of cantonment.

In the forenoon we had some rifle practice at a large

granite stone above the town, which the privates of the 91st were wont to pepper on ball-practice days. On this occasion I saw some very good shooting by Campbell, Yarborough, Bailey, and Paterson, all officers of the 91st, and about the four best shots on the frontier. These four Nimrods had a short time previously boldly challenged any four Dutchmen of the Graaf Reinnet or Colesberg districts to shoot against them. The challenge was accepted by four Dutchmen, who of course got "jolly well licked."

After spending a few days very pleasantly with the garrison, I resolved to hunt on and about the frontiers until the end of March, at which time the horse distemper begins to subside, when I proposed starting on an elephant-hunting expedition into the more remote districts of the far interior. In Colesberg I purchased, by the kind recommendation of Captain Donovan, a second waggon of the cap-tent kind, which turned out to be an unusually good one. Its price was 50*l*. I also purchased an excellent span of black and white oxen from a Dutch blacksmith in the town. From Donovan I bought a dark-brown horse, which I named Colesberg. His price was 300 dollars, and he was well worth double that sum, for a better steed I never crossed. I purchased from a Boer in the town another horse, well known to the garrison by the sobriquet of the "Immense Brute." He was once the property of Captain Christie of the 91st ; when on

one occasion having wandered, an advertisement appeared in one of the frontier papers relative to an "immense brute" in the shape of a tall bay horse, the property of Captain Christie, &c. &c., and ever since he had been distinguished by this elegant appellation. I exchanged my brown stallion with Colonel Campbell for an active grey, which I considered better adapted to my work. Glass was at this time at a premium in Colesberg, every window in the town having been smashed by a recent hail-storm. I loaded up my new waggon with barley, oats, and forage for my horses, they having very hard work before them—hunting the oryx, upon which I was more immediately bent, being more trying to horses than any other sport in South Africa.

My intention was to revisit Colesberg in four or five months, and refit, preparatory to starting for the far interior. I left the skulls and specimens of natural history which I had already collected in the charge of my friend Mr. Dickson, a merchant in Colesberg. During my stay in Colesberg my men were in a constant state of beastly intoxication, and gave me much trouble, and my oxen and horses were constantly reported in the "skit-kraal" or pound. I engaged one more Hottentot, named John Stofolus, as driver to the new waggon. He was an active stout little man, and very neat-handed at stuffing the heads of game, preserving specimens, or any other little job which I might give him to do. He was, however, ex-

tremely fond of fighting with his comrades, and was ever boasting of his own prowess ; but when his courage was put to the proof in assisting me to hunt the more dangerous animals, he was found woefully deficient.



CHAPTER V.

Departure from Colesberg — Jaging Springbok — Vast Herds of Game — Swarms of Flies — Oology — A Nomade Boer's Encampment — Anecdote of the Gemsbok — Cobus rides down a splendid old Bull Gemsbok — A Night in the Desert — Paterson arrives — Bushmen — Their extraordinary Raids across the Desert.

ON the evening of the 2nd of December with considerable difficulty I collected my drunken servants, my oxen and horses, and, taking leave of my kind entertainers, I trekked out of Colesberg, steering west for the vast Karroo plains, where the gemsbok were said to be still abundant. It was agreed that Campbell should follow me on the second day to hunt springbok and black wildebeest, in a district through which I was to travel; and Paterson had applied for a fortnight's leave, with the intention of joining me in the gemsbok country, and enjoying along with me, for a few days, the exciting sport of "jaging" that antelope. I did not proceed very far that evening, my men being intoxicated, and having several times very nearly capsized the waggons. I halted shortly after sundown, when, all the work with the oxen and horses falling upon me, and no fuel being at hand, I was obliged to content myself by dining on a

handful of raw meal and a glass of gin and water. On the following day we performed two long marches, crossing the Sea-Cow River, and halted as it grew dark on a Boer's farm where the plains were covered with springbok. Here Campbell had instructed me to await his arrival, and next morning he was seen approaching the waggons, mounted on the "Immense Brute," and leading two others.¹

Having breakfasted, we started on horseback to "jag" springbok and wildebeest, ordering the waggons to proceed to a vley about four miles to the west. We galloped about the plains, loading and firing for about six hours. The game was very wild. I wounded three springboks and one wildebeest, but lost them all. Campbell shot two springboks. The first was entirely eaten by the vultures (notwithstanding the bushes with which we had covered him), and skinned as neatly as if done by the hand of man. The second had its leg broken by the ball, and was making off, when a jackal suddenly appeared on the bare plain, and, giving him chase, after a good course ran into him.¹

¹ This is a very remarkable and not unfrequent occurrence. Often when a springbok is thus wounded, one or more jackals suddenly appear and assist the hunter in capturing his quarry. In the more distant hunting-lands of the interior it sometimes happens that the lion assists the sportsman in a similar manner with the larger animals; and though this may appear like a traveller's story, it is nevertheless true, and instances of the kind happened both to

Next morning, having bathed and breakfasted, Campbell and I parted : he for Colesberg and I for the Karroo. I trekked on all day, and, having performed a march of twenty-five miles, halted at sundown on the farm of old Wessel, whom I found very drunk. My road lay through vast plains, intersected with ridges of stony hills. On these plains I found the game in herds exceeding anything I had yet seen—springbok in troops of at least ten thousand ; also large bodies of quaggas, wildebeest, blesbok, and several ostriches. I had hoped to have purchased some horses from Wessel, but he was too drunk to transact any business, informing me that he was a Boer, and could not endure the sight of Englishmen, at the same time shoving me out of the house, much to the horror of his wife and daughters, who seemed rather nice people.

myself and to Mr. Oswell of the H.E.I.C.S., a dashing sportsman, and one of the best hunters I ever met, who performed two hunting expeditions into the interior. Mr. Oswell and a companion were one day galloping along the shady banks of the Limpopo, in full pursuit of a wounded buffalo, when they were suddenly joined by three lions, who seemed determined to dispute the chase with them. The buffalo held stoutly on, followed by the three lions, Oswell and his companion bringing up the rear. Very soon the lions sprang upon the mighty bull and dragged him to the ground, when the most terrific scuffle ensued. Mr. Oswell and friend then approached and opened their fire upon the royal family, and, as each ball struck the lions, they seemed to consider it was a poke from the horns of the buffalo, and redoubled their attentions to him. At length the sportsmen succeeded in bowling over two of the lions, upon which the third, finding the ground too hot for him, made off.

Two more days of hard marching, under a burning sun, brought me to the farm of Mynheer Stinkum, which I reached late on the evening of the 7th. He informed me that about fifteen miles to the west of his farm I should fall in with a Boer of the wandering tribe who would direct me to a remote vley in the Karroo, a good many miles beyond his encampment, to which he advised me at once to proceed and hunt in its vicinity. He represented that district as not having been recently disturbed by hunters, and doubted not but I should find gemsbok and other varieties of game abundant.

It being now summer, flies prevailed in fearful swarms in the abodes of the Boers, attracted thither by the smell of meat and milk. On entering Stinkum's house, I found the walls of his large sitting-room actually black with these disgusting insects. They are a cruel plague to the settlers in Southern Africa, and it often requires considerable ingenuity to eat one's dinner or drink a cup of coffee without consuming a number of them. When food is served up, two or three Hottentots or Bush-girls are always in attendance with fans made of ostrich-feathers, which they keep continually waving over the food till the repast is finished.

This morning I purchased a handsome chestnut pony from a Boer named Duprey, a field-cornet, from whom I obtained an egg of the bustard of the largest species for my collection, oology being a subject in which for many

years of my life I had taken great interest, having in my possession one of the finest collections in Great Britain, amassed with much toil and danger. I have descended most of the loftiest precipices in the central Highlands of Scotland, and along the sea-shore, with a rope round my waist, in quest of the eggs of the various eagles and falcons which have their eyries in those almost inaccessible situations. Amongst Stinkum's stud was a handsome brown gelding, to which I took a great fancy ; and after consulting for some time with his wife, he made up his mind to part with him. The lowest price was to be 18*l*. After a good deal of bargaining, however, I persuaded him to part with him for 12*l*. in cash, 15 lbs. of coffee, and 20 lbs. of gunpowder. I christened this horse "Sunday," in honour of the day on which I obtained him. This bargain being concluded, I inspanned, and trekked to the wandering Boer, whom I reached about an hour after sundown.

This man's name was Gous ; he lived in a small canvas tent pitched between his two waggons, round which his vast flocks of sheep assembled every evening, his cattle and horses running day and night in a neighbouring range of grassy hills : his wife was one of the best-looking women I met among the Boers ; she informed me that she was of French extraction. On the following morning I breakfasted with Gous in his tent : he had lots of flesh, milk, and wild honey, which last article was reported

abundant that season. He offered to sell to me a brown horse of good appearance ; his price was too high, but at a subsequent period we came to terms, and I bought him. After breakfast I inspanned, and having proceeded a few miles across a glowing plain, on which I counted fourteen tall ostriches stalking amid large herds of other game, I reached a periodical stream, where I outspanned, the sun being intensely powerful. Here I found another Boer, named Sweirs, encamped with his flocks and herds, having been obliged to leave his farms, situated far in the depths of the Karroo, from want of water. Sweirs was an elderly man, but had been a keen sportsman, and entertained me with many interesting anecdotes relative to the habits of the game and of his hunting adventures in his early days. He informed me that he remembered lions extremely abundant in those districts, and that a few were still to be met with. He related to me instances where he had seen the gemsbok beat off the lion, and he had also come upon the carcasses of both rotting on the plain, the body of the lion being transfixcd by the long sharp horns of the powerful gemsbok so that he could not extract them, and thus both had perished together : he also mentioned that, notwithstanding the agility of the springbok, he had often known the lion dash to the ground two, three, and four in quick succession in a troop.

Four of my oxen being footsore and unable to pro-

ceed, I left them in charge of old Sweirs, and in the cool of the evening I inspanned, and, having proceeded about five miles through an extremely wild and desolate-looking country, on clearing a neck in a range of low rocky hills I came full in view of the vley or pool of water beside which I had been directed to encamp. The breadth of this vley was about three hundred yards. One side of it was grassy and patronized by several flocks of Egyptian wild geese, a species of barnacle, wild ducks, egrets, and cranes. The other side was bare, and here the game drank, and the margin of the water was trampled by the feet of wild animals like an English horsepond. There being no trees beside which to form our camp, we drew up our waggons among some low bushes, about four hundred yards from the vley. When the sun went down I selected the three horses which were to carry myself and two after-riders in the chase of the unicorn on the following morning, and directed my boys to give them a liberal supply of forage to eat during the night.¹

¹ The oryx, or gemsbok, to which I was now about to direct my attention more particularly, is about the most beautiful and remarkable of all the antelope tribe. It is the animal which is supposed to have given rise to the fable of the unicorn, from its long straight horns, when seen, *en profile*, so exactly covering one another as to give it the appearance of having but one. It possesses the erect mane, long sweeping black tail, and general appearance of the horse, with the head and hoofs of an antelope. It is ro-

On the 10th of December, everything having been made ready overnight, I took coffee, saddled up, and started an hour before day-dawn, accompanied by Cobus and Jacob as after-riders leading a spare horse with my packsaddle. We held a south-westerly course, and at length reached the base of a little hillock slightly elevated above the surrounding scenery. Here I dis-

bust in its form, squarely and compactly built, and very noble in its bearing. Its height is about that of an ass, and in colour it slightly resembles that animal. The beautiful black bands which eccentrically adorn its head, giving it the appearance of wearing a stall-collar, together with the manner in which the rump and thighs are painted, impart to it a character peculiar to itself. The adult male measures 3 feet 10 inches in height at the shoulder.

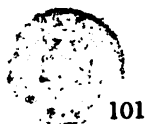
The gemsbok was destined by nature to adorn the parched karroos and arid deserts of South Africa, for which description of country it is admirably adapted. It thrives and attains high condition in barren regions, where it might be imagined that a locust would not find subsistence, and, burning as is the climate, it is perfectly independent of water, which, from my own observation, and the repeated reports both of the Boers and aborigines, I am convinced it never by any chance tastes. Its flesh is deservedly esteemed, and ranks next to the eland. At certain seasons of the year they carry a great quantity of fat, at which time they can more easily be ridden into. Owing to the even nature of the ground which the oryx frequents, its shy and suspicious disposition, and the extreme distances from water to which it must be followed, it is never stalked or driven to an ambush like other antelopes, but is hunted on horseback, and ridden down by a long, severe, tail-on-end chase. Of several animals in South Africa which are hunted in this manner, and may be ridden into by a horse, the oryx is by far the swiftest and most enduring. They are widely diffused throughout the centre and western parts of Southern Africa.

mounted, and having ascended to the summit examined the country all around minutely with my spy-glass, but could not see anything like the oryx. I was in the act of putting up my glass again, when to my intense delight I perceived, feeding within four hundred yards, in a hollow between two hillocks, a glorious herd of about five-and-twenty of the long-wished-for gemsbok, with a fine old bull feeding at a little distance by himself, their long sharp horns glancing in the morning sun like the cheese-toasters of a troop of dragoons. I scarcely allowed myself a moment to feast my eyes on the thrilling sight before me, when I returned to my boys and with them concerted a plan to circumvent them.¹

¹ At this time I was very much in the dark as to the speed of the gemsbok, having been led by a friend to believe that a person even of my weight, if tolerably mounted, could invariably, after a long chase, ride right into them. This, however, is not the case. My friend was deceived in the opinion which he had formed. The fact of the matter was, that he had been hunting a long way to windward of a party who were hunting on the same plains with him, and several of the gemsboks which he had killed had previously been severely chased by the other party. In the whole course of my adventures with gemsbok I only remember four occasions, when mounted on the pick of my stud (which I nearly sacrificed in the attempt), that alone and unassisted I succeeded in riding the oryx to a stand-still. The plan which I adopted, and which is generally used by the Boers, was to mount my light Hottentots or Bushmen on horses of great endurance, and thus, as it were, convert them into greyhounds, with which I coursed the gemsbok as we do stags in Scotland with our rough deer-hounds. A "tail-on-end" chase is sometimes saved, in parts where the

We agreed that Jacob and I should endeavour to ride by a circuitous course a long way to windward of the herd, and that Cobus should then gave chase and drive them towards us. The wind was westerly, but the district to which this herd seemed to belong unfortunately lay to the northward. Jacob and I rode steadily on, occasionally looking behind us, and, presently taking up a commanding position, strained our eyes in the direction of the gemsboks in the full expectation of seeing them flying towards us. After waiting a considerable time and nothing appearing, I felt convinced that we were wrong, and in this conjecture I judged well. A slight inequality in the plain had concealed from our view the retreating herd, which had started in a northerly course. Cobus had long since dashed into the herd, and was at that moment flying across the plains after them, I knew not in what direction. After galloping athwart the boundless plains in a state bordering on distraction, I gave it up, and accompanied by Jacob returned to the waggons in anything but a placid frame of mind.

hunter, from a previous knowledge of the country, knows the course which the gemsbok will take; when, having first discovered the herd, the after-rider is directed to remain quiet until the hunter shall have proceeded by a wide semicircular course some miles to windward of the herd, which being accomplished, the Hottentot gives the troop a tremendous burst towards his master, who, by riding hard for their line, generally manages to get within easy shot as the panting herd strains past him.



About two hours after, Cobus reached the waggon, having ridden the old bull to a stand-still. The old fellow had lain down repeatedly towards the end of the chase, and at length could proceed no farther, and Cobus, after waiting some time and seeing no signs of his master, had reluctantly left him. In the height of the day the sun was intensely powerful; I felt much disgusted at my want of luck in my first attempt, and, burning with anxiety for another trial, I resolved to take the field again in the afternoon, more especially as we had not a pound of flesh in camp. Between three and four P.M. I again sallied forth with the same after-riders leading a spare horse. We cantered across plains to the north-east, and soon fell in with ostriches and quaggas, and after riding a few miles through rather bushy ground, a large herd of hartebeest cantered across our path, and these were presently joined by two or three herds of quaggas and wildebeests, which kept retreating as we advanced, their course being marked by clouds of red dust: at length I perceived a herd of ash-coloured bucks stealing right away ahead of the other game; I at once knew them to be gemsbok, and gave chase at a hard canter. I gradually gained upon them, and after riding hard for about two miles I ordered Cobus to go ahead and endeavour to close with them. At this moment we had reached the border of a slight depression on the plain, down which the herd led, affording me a perfect

view of the exciting scene. The gemsbok now increased their pace, but Cobus's horse, which was a good one with a very light weight, gained upon them at every stride, and before they had reached the opposite side of the plain he was in the middle of the foaming herd, and had turned out a beautiful cow with a pair of uncommonly fine long horns. In one minute he dexterously turned her in my direction, and, heading her, I obtained a fine chance, and rolled her over with two bullets in her shoulder. My thirst was intense, and, the gemsbok having a fine breast of milk, I milked her into my mouth, and obtained a drink of the sweetest beverage I ever tasted.

While I was thus engaged Cobus was shifting his saddle from the "Immense Brute" to the grey, which being accomplished I ordered him to renew the chase, and try to ride down the old bull for me. We fastened the "Immense Brute" to a bush beside the dead gemsbok, and then, mounting the horse which Jacob had been riding, I followed on as best I might. On gaining the first ridge I perceived the troop of oryx about two miles ahead of me ascending another ridge at the extremity of the plain, and Cobus riding hard for them about a mile astern, but rapidly gaining on them. Oryx and boy soon disappeared over the distant ridge, the boy still far behind. The country here changed from grass and bushes to extreme sterility; the whole ground was undermined with the holes of colonies of meercat or

mouse-hunts. This burrowed ground, which is common throughout these parts, was extremely distressing to our horses, the soil giving way at every step, and my steed soon began to flag. On gaining the distant ridge a wide plain lay before me. I looked in every direction, straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of Cobus and the oryx, but they were nowhere to be seen : at length, after riding about two miles farther in the direction which he seemed to hold when I had last seen him, I detected his white shirt on a ridge a long way to my right, and on coming up to him I found that he had ridden the old bull to a stand-still : the old fellow was actually lying panting beside a green bush. I thought him one of the most lovely animals I had ever beheld, and I could have gazed for hours at him, but I was now many miles from my waggon without a chance of water and dying of thirst, so I speedily finished the poor oryx, and having carefully cut off the head I commenced skinning him.

It was now late—too late to take home the cow oryx that night ; the bull was much too far from my camp to think of saving any part of the flesh. I therefore sent off Cobus to the waggon to fetch water and bread, desiring him to meet me at the spot where the cow gemsbok was lying, where I resolved to sleep, to protect her from hyænas and jackals ; but before Jacob and I had accomplished the skinning, and secured the skin and the head

upon the horse, night had set in. My thirst was now fearful, and becoming more and more raging. I would have given anything I possessed for a bottle of water. In the hope of meeting Cobus, Jacob and I rode slowly forward, and endeavoured to find out the place ; but darkness coming on, and there being no feature in the desert to guide me, I lost my way entirely, and after wandering for several hours in the dark, and firing blank shots at intervals, we lay down in the open plain to sleep till morning, having tied our horses to a thorny bush beside where we lay. I felt very cold all night, but my thirst continued raging. My clothes consisted of a shirt and a pair of knee-breeches. My bed was the bull's hide laid over a thorny bush, which imparted to my tough mattress the elasticity of a feather bed. Having slept about two hours, I awoke and found that our horses had absconded, after which I slept little. Day dawned and I rose, and on looking about neither Jacob nor I had the most remote idea of the ground we were on, nor of the position of our camp.

Within a few hundred yards of us was a small hill, which we ascended and looked about, but could not in the least recognise the ground. I however ascertained the points of the compass and the position of my camp by placing my left hand towards the rising sun. I was then returning to the spot where I had slept, when suddenly I perceived, standing within three hundred yards of me, the

horse which I had fastened beside the cow oryx on the preceding evening, and on going up I found both all right. I immediately saddled the horse, and rode hard for camp, ordering Jacob to commence skinning the cow, and promising to send him water and bread as soon as I reached the waggons.

On my way thither I met Cobus on horseback, bearing bread and a bottle of water, wandering he knew not whither, having entirely lost his reckoning. My thirst had by this time departed, so I did not touch the water, but allowed him to take it on to Jacob. He informed me that John Stofolus was coming on with the baggage-waggon to take up the venison ; and before riding far I fell in with him, having, with a Hottentot's usual good sense, come away without water in the casks. Having shown him how to steer, I rode on to the camp, which I was right glad to reach, and felt much refreshed with a good bowl of tea. I was actively employed during the rest of the day in preserving the two oryx-heads for my collection. In the evening a horseman on a jaded steed was seen approaching the waggons, accompanied by an after-rider leading a spare horse. This was my friend Paterson, who had succeeded in obtaining a fortnight's leave of absence, and with whom that evening, over a gemsbok stew, I "fought my battles o'er again." Our respective studs being considerably done up, and in need of rest, the following day was

devoted to "dulce otium," washing our rifles, and writing up the log.

On the 14th we went out on foot after a troop of ostriches, one of which we wounded, and came home much exhausted. The very ground was as hot as the side of a stove. The following day we were visited by a party of Boers from the neighbouring encampments, who had come to see how we were getting on. Finding our brandy good, they made themselves very agreeable, and sat for many hours conversing with us. The leading subject of conversation was gemsbok and lion shooting, and the slaying and capturing of whole tribes of marauding Bushmen in bygone days. They informed us that when they first occupied these districts the game was far more abundant, and eland and koodoos were plentiful. Their herds of cattle were constantly attacked and plundered by the vindictive wild Bushmen.¹ The Boers

¹ Unlike the Caffre tribes, who lift cattle for the purpose of preserving them and breeding from them, the sole object of the Bushmen is to drive them to their secluded habitations in the desert, where they massacre them indiscriminately, and continue feasting and gorging themselves until the flesh becomes putrid. When a Kaffir has lifted cattle, and finds himself so hotly pursued by the owners that he cannot escape with his booty, he betakes himself to flight, and leaves the cattle unscathed; but the spiteful Bushmen have a most provoking and cruel system of horribly mutilating the poor cattle, when they find that they are likely to fall into the hands of their rightful owners, by discharging their poisoned arrows at them, hamstringing them, and cutting lumps of flesh

informed us that in a country to the south-west of our actual possession, a tribe of these natives for many years were in the habit of practising raids with impunity upon the herds of the farmers in the Raw-feldt, assisted by a vast and impracticable desert which intervened between their country and the more fertile pastoral districts. They seemed to prefer extremely dry seasons for these incursions, their object in this being that their pursuers, who of course followed on horseback while they were always on foot, should not obtain water for the horses. Their own wants in this respect they provided for in the following curious manner. They had regular stages at long intervals in a direct line across the desert, where, assisted by their wives, they concealed water in ostrich-eggs, which they brought from amazing distances, and these spots, being marked by some slight inequality in the ground, they could discover either by day or night from their perfect knowledge of the country. They were thus enabled fearlessly to drive off a herd of cattle, whose sufferings from thirst gave them little concern, and

off their living carcasses. This naturally so incenses the owners, that they never show the Bushmen any quarter, but shoot them down right and left, sparing only the children, whom they tame and convert into servants. The people who suffer from these depredations are Boers, Griquas, and Bechuanas, all of whom are possessed of large herds of cattle, and the massacres of the Bushmen, arising from these raids, are endless.

to travel day and night, while their mounted pursuers, requiring light to hold the spoor, could necessarily only follow by day, and were soon obliged to give up the pursuit on account of their horses being without water.



CHAPTER VI.

Hard Chase of an Oryx — A Brindled Gnoo reduces himself to a "dead lock," and is taken — Paterson slays a Gemsbok and a Bull Wildebeest — He leaves for Colesberg — Ostrich-eggs — Novel Method of carrying them — Anecdotes of the Ostrich — Affray with a Porcupine — He proves a rough Rider for my Horse — Narrow Escape from the Thrust of a dying Oryx — The grateful Water-root — Troops of Springboks cover the face of the land — Their Migrations — The finest shot at my leisure — Beer Vley.

At an early hour on the morning of the 16th Paterson and I again took the field, accompanied by our three after-riders, and, having ridden several miles in a northerly direction, we started an oryx, to which Paterson and his after-rider gave immediate chase. I then rode in an easterly direction, and shortly fell in with a fine old cow oryx, which we instantly charged. She stole away at a killing pace, her black tail streaming in the wind, and her long, sharp horns laid well back over her shoulders. Aware of her danger, and anxious to gain the desert, she put forth her utmost speed and strained across the bushy plain. She led us a tearing chase of upwards of five miles in a northerly course, Cobus sticking well into her, and I falling far behind. After a sharp burst of

about three miles, Cobus and the grey disappeared over a ridge about half a mile ahead of me. I here mounted a fresh horse, which had been led by Jacob, and followed. On gaining the ridge, I perceived the grey disappearing over another ridge, a fearfully long way ahead. When I reached this point I commanded an extremely extensive prospect, but no living object was visible on the desolate plain.

Whilst deliberating in which direction to ride, I suddenly heard a pistol-shot, some distance to my left, which I knew to be Cobus's signal that the oryx was at bay. Having ridden half a mile, I discovered Cobus dismounted in a hollow, and no oryx in view. He had succeeded in riding the quarry to a stand, and, I not immediately appearing, he very injudiciously had at once lost sight of the buck and left it. Having upbraided Cobus in no measured terms for his stupidity, I sought to retrieve the fortunes of the day by riding in the direction in which he had left the oryx. The ground here was uneven and interspersed with low hillocks. We extended our front and rode on up wind, and, having crossed two or three ridges, I discovered a troop of bucks a long way ahead. Having made for these, they turned out to be hartebeests. At this moment I perceived three magnificent oryx a short distance to my left. On observing us, they cantered along the ridge towards a fourth oryx, which I at once perceived to be "embossed with foam and dark

with soil," and knew to be the antelope sought for. Once more we charged her. Our horses had now considerably recovered their wind, but the poor oryx was much distressed; and after a chase of half a mile I jumped off my horse and sent a bullet through her ribs, which brought her to a stand, when I finished her with the other barrel. She proved a fine old cow with very handsome horns; the spot on which she fell being so sterile that we could not even obtain the smallest bushes with which to conceal her from the vultures, we covered her with my after-rider's saddlecloth, which consisted of a large blanket: the head, on which I placed great value, we cut off and bore along with us.

On my way home I came across Paterson's after-rider, "jaging" a troop of seven gemsbok, but fearfully to leeward, his illustrious master being nowhere in sight. An hour after I reached the camp Paterson came in, in a towering rage, having been unlucky in both his chases. I now despatched one of my waggons to bring home my oryx. It returned about twelve o'clock that night, carrying the skin of my gemsbok and also a magnificent old blue wildebeest (the brindled gnou), which the Hottentots had obtained in an extraordinary manner. He was found with one of his fore legs caught over his horn, so that he could not run, and they hamstrung him and cut his throat. He had probably managed to get himself into this awkward attitude while fighting with some of

his fellows. The vultures had consumed all the flesh of the gemsbok, and likewise torn my blanket with which I had covered her.

On the following day, all our steeds being very much done up, Paterson and I visited the neighbouring Boers to endeavour to buy and hire some horses. I bought one clipper of Mynheer Gous for 25*l.*, and called him "Grouse," and Paterson succeeded in hiring one, and with these, on the following day, we continued our campaign against the gemsboks. Paterson's after-rider not being well up to his work, I lent him Cobus, and on this occasion his perseverance was rewarded by a noble gemsbok which he rode down and slew, and also a fine bull blue wildebeest, which last animal is rather rare in these parts. We had one more day together, after which, much to my regret, Paterson was obliged to take leave of me, and start for Colesberg, his leave of absence having expired. One of his horses being footsore, I purchased him, in the hope of his soon recovering, which after a few days' rest he did : I called him "Paterson," after his old master. My stud now consisted of eight horses, but three of them were missing, and I despatched Jacob in quest of them, who returned on the third day bringing them with him, having followed the spoor upwards of fifty miles.

In the evening two of the Hottentots walked in to camp, bending under a burden of ostrich-eggs, having

discovered a nest containing five-and-thirty. Their manner of carrying them amused me. Having divested themselves of their leather "crackers," which in colonial phrase means trousers, they had secured the ankles with rheimpys, and, having thus converted them into bags, they had crammed them with as many ostrich-eggs as they would contain. They left about half of the number behind concealed in the sand, for which they returned on the following morning. While encamped at this vley we fell in with several nests of ostriches, and here I first ascertained a singular propensity peculiar to these birds. If a person discovers the nest, and does not at once remove the eggs, on returning he will most probably find them all smashed. This the old birds almost invariably do, even when the intruder has not handled the eggs or so much as ridden within five yards of them. The nest is merely a hollow scooped in the sandy soil, generally amongst heath or other low bushes; its diameter is about seven feet; it is believed that two hens often lay in one nest. The hatching of the eggs is not left, as is generally believed, to the heat of the sun, but, on the contrary, the cock relieves the hen in the incubation. These eggs form a considerable item in the Bushman's cuisine, and the shells are converted into water-flasks, cups, and dishes. I have often seen Bush-girls and Bakalahari women, who belong to the wandering Bechuana tribes of the Kalahari desert, come down to the fountains from their remote habitations,

sometimes situated at an amazing distance, each carrying on her back a kaross or a network containing from twelve to fifteen ostrich-egg shells, which had been emptied by a small aperture at one end : these they fill with water and cork up the hole with grass.

A favourite method adopted by the wild Bushman for approaching the ostrich and other varieties of game is to clothe himself in the skin of one of these birds, in which, taking care of the wind, he stalks about the plain, cunningly imitating the gait and motions of the ostrich until within range, when, with a well-directed poisoned arrow from his tiny bow, he can generally seal the fate of any of the ordinary varieties of game. These insignificant-looking arrows are about two feet six inches in length ; they consist of a slender reed, with a sharp bone head, thoroughly poisoned with a composition, of which the principal ingredients are obtained sometimes from a succulent herb, having thick leaves, yielding a poisonous milky juice, and sometimes from the jaws of snakes. The bow barely exceeds three feet in length ; its string is of twisted sinews. When a Bushman finds an ostrich's nest he ensconces himself in it and there awaits the return of the old birds, by which means he generally secures the pair. It is by means of these little arrows that the majority of the fine plumes are obtained which grace the heads of the fair throughout the civilized world.

It was now the height of summer, and every day the

heat of the sun was terrific, but there was generally a breeze of wind, and the nights were cool. Our vley was daily decreasing, and I saw that, unless we were visited by rains, it would soon be no more. On the morning of the 22nd I had rather an absurd adventure with a porcupine, which cost me my packsaddle, the only thing of the sort I had in camp. Long before daybreak I saddled up, and rode north with my two after-riders and a spare horse with the packsaddle. As day dawned I came upon a handsome old porcupine, taking his morning airing. At first sight he reminded me of a badger. Unwilling to discharge my rifle, as it was probable that we were in the vicinity of oryx, I resolved to attempt his destruction with the thick end of my jambok, the porcupine, like the seal, being easily killed with a blow on the nose. I jumped off my horse, and after a short race, in which I frequently turned him, when he invariably doubled back between my legs, giving me the full benefit of his bristling quills, I succeeded in killing him with the jambok, but not till I had received several wounds in my hands. My boys the while sat grinning in their saddles, enjoying the activity of their "baas."

Having covered him with bushes, we rode on, and shortly came upon an immense, compact herd of several thousand "trekking" springboks, which were exceedingly tame, and in the middle of them stood two oryx. These we managed for the first time to drive in a southerly

direction, being that in which the camp lay; and after a sharp and rather circular burst, I headed the finer, and bowled her over. She proved to be a young cow, about three years old. Having disemboweled her, and prepared her for the packsaddle with a *couteau-de-chasse*, by splitting the brisket, passing the knife along the gristly bones on one side of it, and breaking the back by a dexterous touch of the knife, where certain ribs well known to the hunter join the vertebræ, whereby the animal can more easily be balanced on the packsaddle, we succeeded with great difficulty in placing her on "Sunday," and rode slowly for the place where we had left the porcupine. We placed him on the oryx, and secured him with a rheim, but we had not proceeded far when some of the quills pricked the steed, upon which he commenced bucking and prancing in the most frantic manner, which of course made matters ten times worse, causing the porcupine to beat the devil's tattoo on his back. The gemsbok's head, also, which, being a poor one, I had not cut off, unfortunately got adrift, and kept dangling about his haunches, the sharp horns striking his belly at every spring. He broke loose from Jacob, who led him, and set off across the country at a terrific pace, eventually smashing the packsaddle, but still failing to disengage himself from the gemsbok, whose hind and fore feet, being fastened together, slipped round under his belly, impeding his motions, and in this condition he was eventually

secured, being considerably lacerated about the haunches by the horns of the oryx.

Next day Cobus and I fell in with the finest bull oryx I had yet met, which, after a severe chase, we rode into and slew. For some evenings previous a large bright comet had appeared in the south-west, having a tearing, fiery tail, which strange meteor, to the best of my recollection, shone brightly in the clear firmament for five or six weeks. We lived well, but lonely. My camp abounded with every delicacy—tongues, brains, marrow-bones, kidneys, rich soup, with the most delicious venison in the world, &c. &c., and a constant supply of ostrich-eggs. The 25th was cool and cloudy, being the first day that the sky had been overcast since I had left the Thebus Flats.

In the afternoon I resolved to ride far into the oryx country, sleep under a bush, and hunt them on the following morning. I accordingly left my waggons about three P.M., with my two after-riders and a spare horse, and rode about fifteen miles in a northerly course, when we secured our horses to a bush, to leeward of which we slept. On my way thither I dismounted on an arid plain to breathe our steeds and dig up some bulbs of the water-root¹ for immediate consumption, my thirst being very

¹ This interesting root, which has doubtless saved many from dying of thirst, is met with throughout the most parched plains of the Karroo. It is a large oval bulb, varying from six to ten inches

severe. While cantering along we passed several troops of hartebeests and ostriches, and late in the day I observed a small troop of oryx.

in diameter, and is of an extremely juicy consistence, with rather an insipid flavour. It is protected by a thin brown skin, which is easily removed with the back of a knife. It has small insignificant narrow leaves, with little black dots on them, which are not easily detected by an inexperienced eye. The ground round it is generally so baked with the sun, that it has to be dug out with a knife. The top of the bulb is discovered about eight or nine inches from the surface of the ground, and the earth all round it must then be carefully removed. A knowledge of this plant is invaluable to him whose avocations lead him into these desolate regions. Throughout the whole extent of the great Kalahari desert, and the vast tracts of country adjoining thereto, an immense variety of bulbs and roots of this juicy description succeed one another monthly, there being hardly a season in the year at which the poor Bakalahari, provided with a sharp-pointed stick hardened in the fire, cannot obtain a meal, being intimately acquainted with each and all the herbs and roots which a bountiful hand has provided for his sustenance. There are also several succulent plants, having thick juicy leaves, which in like manner answer the purpose of food and drink.

Above all, a species of bitter water-melon is thickly scattered over the entire surface of the known parts of the great Kalahari desert. These often supply the place of food and water to the wild inhabitants of those remote regions, and it is stated by the Bakalahari that these melons improve in flavour as they penetrate farther to the west. Most of these roots are much eaten by the gemsboks, which are led by instinct to root them out. The elephants also, apprised by their acute sense of smell of their position, feed upon them, and whole tracts may be seen ploughed up by the tusks of these sagacious animals, in quest of them.

On the 26th I raised my head from my saddle about one o'clock A.M., imagining the day was dawning, and, having roused my after-riders, we proceeded to saddle our horses; but I soon perceived that the bright moon, across which a bank of clouds was at that moment passing, had deceived me, and accordingly we off-saddled, and in a few minutes I was once more asleep. Towards morning a smart shower of rain suddenly falling on my face broke in abruptly on my slumbers, when we once more arose, and, when day dawned, we saddled up, and held a northerly course. We found the fresh tracks of hyænas not more than fifteen yards from our horses. Within a hundred yards of our bush we at once discovered the spoor of an old bull-gemsbok which had fed past us during the night; and we had proceeded but a short distance when we discovered a herd of seven noble oryx within a quarter of a mile of us, pasturing in a low hollow; upon which I directed Cobus to ride round and "jag" them up to me, whilst I took up a position in front. The oryx presently charged past me; but Cobus had started after an old bull which I did not see, and which he rode to a stand. To these seven oryx I accordingly gave chase, and before the first mile I was riding within a hundred yards of them. Here we were joined by another fine herd of twenty-two oryx, nearly all full-grown, and carrying superb horns. On we swept at a thrilling pace, and, after riding upwards of another mile, I

pulled up to have a shot ; but "Grouse," which I rode, being very restless, the herd got a long way ahead before I could fire. I however wounded one fine old cow, which I ascertained some hours afterwards. Having fired, I resumed the chase, and, observing that the finest bull of the first herd seemed distressed, I endeavoured to cut him off from the herd, which I succeeded in doing, and, in the excitement of the moment, I determined to follow him as long as my horse could go. Away and away we wildly flew—the oryx leading me a cruel long chase due north, tail-on-end, from my waggons, over a very heavy country entirely undermined by the endless burrows of the mouse-hunts. My poor steed became at length completely knocked up, while the oryx seemed to gain fresh speed, and increase the distance between us. I felt that my horse could not do it. One chance alone remained : there was still a shot in my left barrel. I pulled up, and, vaulting from my panting steed, with trembling hand and beating heart I cocked my rifle and let fly at the round stern of the retreating antelope. The ball passed within a few inches of his ear and raised the dust about fifty yards in advance of him ; and I had the mortification of having to content myself with watching his lessening form as he retreated across the boundless waste. Faint and weary, and intensely mortified at the issue of my long-continued chase, my lips cracking, and my tongue and throat parched with raging thirst, I threw my bridle on

my arm and led my weary steed homewards, and I inwardly wished that, instead of my being a man of fourteen stone weight, nature had formed me of the most Liliputian dimensions. I was now a fearful long way from my camp; hills that in the morning were blue before me were now equally blue far far behind me; "Grouse" could scarcely walk along with me, nor did he ever recover that morning's work.

Upon my return I observed Jacob making for me, leading a fresh horse, of which I stood not a little in need; he stated that he had seen an oryx standing at a distance on the plain, which bore the appearance of being wounded. We then made for this oryx, and on my overhauling her with my spyglass I saw plainly that she was badly hit. On my cantering up to her she ran but a short distance, when she gave in, and, facing about, stood at bay. I foolishly approached her without firing, and very nearly paid dearly for my folly, for, lowering her sharp horns, she made a desperate rush towards me, and would inevitably have run me through had not her strength at this moment failed her, when she staggered forward and fell to the ground.

On the following day the waters of my vley sank into the earth and disappeared; the water for some days past had become very "brack," making myself and my people very unwell.

On the 28th I had the satisfaction of beholding, for the

first time, what I had often heard the Boers allude to—viz. a “trek-bokken,” or grand migration of springboks. This was, I think, the most extraordinary and striking scene, as connected with beasts of the chase, that I have ever beheld. For about two hours before the day dawned I had been lying awake in my waggon, listening to the grunting of the bucks within two hundred yards of me, imagining that some large herd of springboks was feeding beside my camp; but on my rising when it was clear, and looking about me, I beheld the ground to the northward of my camp actually covered with a dense living mass of springboks, marching slowly and steadily along, extending from an opening in a long range of hills on the west, through which they continued pouring, like the flood of some great river, to a ridge about a mile to the north-east, over which they disappeared. The breadth of the ground they covered might have been somewhere about half a mile. I stood upon the fore chest of my waggon for nearly two hours, lost in wonder at the novel and wonderful scene which was passing before me, and had some difficulty in convincing myself that it was reality which I beheld, and not the wild and exaggerated picture of a hunter’s dream. During this time their vast legions continued streaming through the neck in the hills in one unbroken compact phalanx. At length I saddled up, and rode into the middle of them with my rifle and after-riders, and fired into the ranks until

fourteen had fallen, when I cried "Enough." We then retraced our steps to secure from the ever-voracious vultures the venison which lay strewed along my gory track. Having collected the springboks at different bushes, and concealed them with brushwood, we returned to camp, where I partook of coffee while my men were inspanning.

A person anxious to kill many springboks might have bagged thirty or forty that morning. I never, in all my subsequent career, fell in with so dense a herd of these antelopes, nor found them allow me to ride so near them. Having inspanned, we proceeded with the waggons to take up the fallen game, which being accomplished, we held for the small periodical stream beside which the wandering Boers were encamped, that point being in my line of march for Beer Vley. Vast and surprising as was the herd of springboks which I had that morning witnessed, it was infinitely surpassed by what I beheld on the march from my vley to old Sweirs's camp; for, on our clearing the low range of hills through which the springboks had been pouring, I beheld the boundless plains, and even the hill sides which stretched away on every side of me, thickly covered, not with "herds," but with "one vast herd" of springboks; far as the eye could strain the landscape was alive with them, until they softened down into a dim red mass of living creatures.

To endeavour to form any idea of the amount of antelopes which I that day beheld were vain; but I have,

nevertheless, no hesitation in stating that some hundreds of thousands of springboks were that morning within the compass of my vision. On reaching the encampment of the Boers I outspanned, and set about cutting up and salting my venison : the Boers had likewise been out with their "roers," and shot as many as they could carry home. Old Sweirs acknowledged that it was a very fair "trek-bokken," but observed that it was not many when compared with what he had seen. "You this morning," he remarked, "behold only one flat covered with springboks, but I give you my word that I have ridden a long day's journey over a succession of flats covered with them, as far as I could see, as thick as sheep standing in a fold." I spent the following two days with the Boers. Each morning and evening we rode out and hunted the springboks, killing as many as we could bring home. The vast armies of the springboks, however, did not tarry long in that neighbourhood ; having quickly consumed every green herb, they passed away to give other districts a benefit, thus leaving the Boers no alternative but to strike their tents, and remove with their flocks and herds to lands where they might find pasture.

On the morning of the 31st I left this periodical stream, whose name was "Rhinoceros Pool," and held on for Beer Vley, which I reached in about eight hours. Our march was a very hot one, across a desolate barren country destitute of water. The country, though

barren, was not, however, without game: I saw several herds of springboks, of from 500 to 2000 in each; also several troops of gigantic-looking ostriches, and abundance of bustard and Namaqua partridges. I shot two springboks, and broke the fore leg of a third. Beer Vley, at the southern end of which I had now encamped, is a very extensive, low-lying, level plain; its length might be somewhat about twenty miles, and its breadth averaging from one to two miles. Through the entire length of this grassy vley runs, in the rainy season, a deep stream of water, which meanders in a very serpentine course along the centre of the plain, and, overflowing its banks, irrigates and enriches the surrounding pasture. At that season, however, this channel was perfectly dry, and the plain was covered with rich green grass. The country surrounding Beer Vley is extremely desolate and sterile, consisting of low rocky hills and undulating sandy plains, barely covered with dwarfish scrubby shrubs and small karroo bushes.

On the morrow I removed my encampment about eight or nine miles farther down the vley, being obliged, from the broken and uneven nature of the ground, to march in a semicircular course, holding along the outside of the vley. I drew up my waggons on the plain close to the bank of a dry channel, with a fine large pool of running water in my vicinity. This was the finest place that can be described to shoot springboks, and also to select extra-

ordinary specimens on account of their horns, which I was anxious to do. The country, on every side, was covered with immense herds of these antelopes, and they all seemed to have an inclination to come and feed close along the side of the watercourse beside which we lay. This channel being about ten feet deep, and extending throughout the entire length of the plain, I had only to study the wind, and could walk up within easy shot of any herd, and select what buck I pleased.

Here I remained for several days enjoying brilliant sport, and daily securing fine specimens of oryx, springboks, and other game. Here, also, I shot my first ostrich, a fine old cock. It was a very long shot; I gave my rifle several feet of elevation, yet nevertheless the ball struck him on the leg, breaking it below the knee, when he fell and was unable to rise. The power possessed by an ostrich in his leg can hardly be imagined. The thigh is very muscular, and resembles that of a horse more than of a bird. In the act of dying, he lashed out and caught me a severe blow on my leg, which laid me prostrate.

CHAPTER VII.

Leave Beer Vley — A Bushboy captured and enlisted as a Follower — Famous Sport with Wildebeest and Quaggas from a Hunting-hole — Water fails, and we march to the Great Orange River — Beautiful Appearance of the River — Stink Vonteyn, a famous sporting quarter — An Ostrich's Nest — Bold Mountain Ranges — The Griqua Tribe, their Manners and Customs — An ancient Mimosa Forest — Residence of a Bushman — Successful Chase of a noble Bull Oryx.

On the 9th I considered I had sufficiently long enjoyed the sweets of Beer Vley ; and accordingly, the waggons being properly packed, I inspanned in the afternoon, and trekked to the south. On the following morning we inspanned at the dawn of day, and retraced our steps to the Rhinoceros Pool. The heat continued most oppressive, the wind still northerly. We were infested with myriads of common flies, which proved a constant annoyance, filling tent and waggons to such a degree that it was impossible to sit in them. I rode out in the morning of the 11th, accompanied by an after-rider, and shot two springboks, which we bore to camp secured on our horses behind our saddles by passing the buckles of the girths on each side through the fore and hind legs of the antelopes, having first performed an

incision between the bone and the sinews with the *couteau-de-chasse*, according to colonial usage.

The Boers had informed me of a small fountain one march in advance, where they recommended me to hunt for a short time, and this place I intended to be my next encampment. On the morrow we inspanned at earliest dawn, and trekked about ten miles in a north-easterly course across a barren extensive plain, steering parallel with the country frequented by the oryx. We drew up our waggons at a place where some Boers had been encamped during the winter months. Here we found a well with nothing but mud in it. I set to work with the spade and cleaned it out, and presently had good water for myself and people. I despatched one of my Hottentots on horseback to seek for water in advance for the horses and oxen. He shortly returned, and reported another deserted Boer encampment about a mile ahead, at which there was a stronger fountain, but considerably choked with mud. Having breakfasted, I removed my waggons thither, and encamped. This fountain will be ever memorable in the annals of my African campaign, since on the following day I was there joined by a unique and interesting specimen of a Bushman, who has ever since faithfully followed my fortunes through every peril and hardship by sea and land ; and is at the moment that I write brandishing in the highlands of Scotland an imitation of a Cape waggon-whip which he has con-

structed, and calling out with stentorian lungs the names of the oxen composing the team which he, at a subsequent period, drove when he alone stood by me, all my followers having forsaken me in the far interior.

In the afternoon I saddled up, and started with my two after-riders and a spare horse, with the intention of sleeping in the oryx country, and hunting next day. We rode north through sandy plains and hollows on which large herds of gnoots and springboks were grazing. Just as the sun descended we started a fine old bull oryx. We discovered him in a bushy hollow; after a sharp burst Cobus managed to turn him, when, by heading him, I got within range, and finished him with a couple of shots. It was now dark; having off-saddled our horses, we knee haltered them, and allowed them to graze for an hour; after which, having secured them to a neighbouring bush, we lay down to sleep on the hard ground. My pillow was the neck of the old bull; the jackal sang his coronach. On the 13th I shot a fine old steinbok, and on nearing my encampment I discovered two different vleys, containing water. Upon reaching my camp I found a funny little fellow in the shape of the Bushboy before alluded to, awaiting my arrival. My Hottentots had detected his black woolly head protruding from the reeds adjoining the fountain, and had captured him. I presented him with a suit of new clothes and a glass of spirits, and we immediately became and have ever since continued the best of friends.

He informed me that, when a child, he was taken by a party of Dutch Boers at a massacre of his countrymen, and from these he had subsequently absconded on account of their cruel treatment of him. The Boers had named him "Ruyter," probably after a certain Dutch admiral, which name he still bears.

In the afternoon I rode to one of the vleys, accompanied by two of my men, bearing pickaxes and spades and my bedding. We dug a shooting-hole on the usual principle, about three feet deep and eight in diameter, on the lee side of the largest vley. In this hole I used to take my station every night—the jackals and hyænas growling around me—and await the coming of the dawn to get a sight of the game that came to drink. In this manner I enjoyed excellent sport among the wildebeests and quaggas until the 17th, when, through want of water for my oxen, I was compelled to march for the Great Orange River, which was the nearest water, being distant upwards of thirty miles. We inspanned in the afternoon, and, having performed a march of twelve miles, holding a north-easterly course, I outspanned for a couple of hours to allow my oxen to graze; after which I again inspanned, and trekked about twelve miles farther by moonlight, when we halted till the day dawned, making fast the horses and oxen. The country here assumed a less sterile appearance than that which I had occupied during the last five weeks, being ornamented with a few ancient

trees, bearing a leaf resembling that of the willow, and called by the Dutch "olean-wood ;" there were also a few dwarfish thorny trees of a species of mimosa.

On the 18th we inspanned at the dawn of day, and after a march of about four hours through a wild and uninhabited country we suddenly found ourselves on the bank of the magnificent Orange River. This queen of African rivers forms a leading feature in the geography of Southern Africa. Its length, I believe, is somewhere about a thousand miles. It rises in the east, in the Vitbergen mountain-range, a little to the northward of the latitude of Port Natal, and, flowing westward, it is joined by the fair Vaal river about fifty miles below the spot where I had now arrived ; thence it continues its course westward, and falls into the South Atlantic about five hundred miles to the north of the Cape of Good Hope. We made the river at a place called Davinar's Drift or ford, beside which was a comfortable Dutch farm. The owner was a young Boer from the Cape district, and had obtained his present enviable position by marrying a fat old widow. Their chief riches consisted of sheep and goats, of which they possessed enormous flocks, which were in very fine condition, the country being suitable for pasturing these animals. Large herds of trekking springboks were feeding in sight of the homestead. I had passed several herds on my morning's march, and had shot three, which were in good order.

The Boers, contrary to my expectation, reported the river fordable, though I had been informed that it was very large. Before venturing to cross we were occupied for upwards of an hour in raising the goods liable to be damaged by water, by means of a platform consisting of green willow boughs, with which we filled the bottom of the waggons, and then replaced the cargo. The descent on our side was extremely steep, and we found it necessary to rheim, viz. to secure, by means of the drag-chains, both hind wheels of each waggon. The drift was extremely rough, and jolted the waggons about sadly. We, however, got safely through, and, having proceeded about half a mile up the opposite bank, we encamped. No person who has not contemplated a magnificent river under similar circumstances can form an idea of the pleasure I felt in reaching this oasis of the desert. For many weeks past our lot had been cast in the arid plains of the parched karroo, where there had often been barely sufficient water for our cattle to drink, with cloudless skies and an intense burning sun over our heads, and no tree nor bush of any description whose friendly shade might shelter us from the power of its rays. Here, "o' the sudden," a majestic river rolled before our delighted eyes, whose fertile banks were adorned with groves clad in everlasting verdure. At the spot where we crossed, the river reminded me of the appearance exhibited by certain parts of the river Spey in summer during a

spate. The breadth of the Orange River, however, is in general about three hundred yards. The whole of the banks are ornamented with a rich fringe of weeping willows, whose branches dip into the stream, and also of many other trees and bushes whose blossoms and pleasing foliage yielded the most delicious balmy perfume. Numerous flocks of the feathered tribe by their beautiful plumage and melodious notes increased the charm of this lovely scene. The entomologist could likewise have found abundance of interesting objects in his department, the ground and trees swarming with curious, if not gaudy, insects. My first move after halting was to enjoy a delightful bathe; after which, having donned my best apparel, I recrossed the river on horseback to visit the happy couple whose farm I have previously described.

I found them civil and communicative, and obtained from them a supply of vegetables, which to me were most acceptable, having tasted nothing of that sort for many weeks. They informed me that about fifteen miles in a northerly direction there was a saltpan, in the vicinity of which I might find koodoos and sassaybys, in addition to the varieties of game which I had already hunted. I walked through their garden, which, besides vegetables in great variety, contained several kinds of fruit-trees, such as peaches, apricots, &c.; these thrived well, their branches being laden with abundance of fruit. On the forenoon of the 19th, having twice enjoyed the luxury of

bathing, I saddled up, and rode north to an extensive range of rocky hills to seek for kōodoos. Crossing an extensive plain which intervened, I came upon an ostrich's nest, containing two eggs; the cock was sitting on the nest, and, imagining that we would pass without observing him, he allowed us to ride within sixty yards before he started. I found the hills for which I rode of so stony and rocky a character that it was impossible to ride through them. They, however, bore a goodly coating of rank grass of various kinds, and the hollows contained a few dwarfish bushes. Leaving my steed in charge of my after-rider, I traversed, with my rifle, several of these rocky ranges, but failed to find any traces of koodoos. It was the sort of country exactly suited for the raebok, to which I have already alluded, and of these antelopes I discovered three small herds. On ascending to the summit of the highest hill in my vicinity, I commanded a grand panoramic view of the surrounding scenery. An endless succession of bold mountains, of considerable height, extended as far as I could see in a northerly and easterly direction. Some of them were tabular, but others of conical and pyramidal shapes towered above their fellows; their abrupt forms standing forth in grand relief above the surrounding country. Throughout all these mountain-ranges plains of considerable extent, more or less undulating, intervened.

At one P.M. on the following day I inspanned and trekked

north to the saltpan, which we reached in the dark. The general character of the country became richer after crossing the Orange River. The plains were adorned with a more luxuriant coating of grass and in greater profusion; and the small karroo bushes were replaced by others of fairer growth, and of a different variety. Most of these yielded a strong aromatic perfume, but more particularly when the ground had been refreshed by a shower of rain; on which occasions the African wilderness diffuses a perfume so exquisite and balmy, that no person that has not experienced its delights can form an idea of it. Our march lay through an extensive undulating country. We passed several troops of hartebeests and springboks, and saw for the first time one sassayby, a large antelope allied to the hartebeest, and of a purple colour. Mountain ranges bound the view on every side, and I could discover by means of my spy-glass that strips of forests of mimosa stretched along their bases. The saltpan to which we had come was of an oval shape, and about a quarter of a mile in diameter.

It was a low basin whose sides sloped gently down, but the middle was a dead level of fine sand. Upon this sand, throughout the greater part of the pan, lay a thick layer of good coarse salt, varying from one to four inches in depth. Heavy rains fill the pan or basin with water, and, the dry season succeeding, the water disappears, and large deposits of salt are found. These pans or salt-licks

are met with in several parts of South Africa. Those which mainly supply the colony with good salt are situated between Utenage and Algoa Bay ; they are of considerable extent, and yield a surprising quantity. Ostriches and almost every variety of antelope frequent these pans for the purpose of licking the brack or salt ground, to which they are very partial. The pan which we had reached was formerly visited by Boers and Griquas for the purpose of obtaining salt, but had of late years been abandoned for others yielding it of a better quality. The country around was consequently undisturbed ; and, being utterly uninhabited, was lonely and as still as the grave.

On the morning of the 21st I left my waggons encamped beside the salt-pan, and, having proceeded about half a mile in a northerly direction along a seldom trodden waggon-track, I discovered a fountain of excellent water, but very strongly impregnated with saltpetre. This fountain I afterwards learnt is termed by the Boers "Cruit Vonteyn," or Powder Fountain, its waters resembling the washings of a gun-barrel ; but the Griquas more elegantly call it "Stink Vonteyn." At breakfast-time I was joined by a party of ruffianly Griquas, who were proceeding with a dilapidated-looking waggon, which had no sail, to hunt hartebeests and blue wildebeests, in the vicinity of a small fountain to the north-east where game was reported abundant. They were accompanied by several wild-

looking, naked Bushmen attendants, whom they had captured when young, and domesticated. These drove their shooting-horses loose behind the waggon, grazing as they went along. I also observed a couple of milch-cows with calves among their loose oxen, a healthy luxury without which that race of people seldom proceed on a journey. The country occupied by the Griquas extends from Rhama, a village on the Orange River, about thirty miles to the east of my present position, to Griquastadt their capital, a village situated about a hundred miles to the northward of the junction of the Vaal with the Orange River. They are governed by a chief, whose name is Waterboer. These men are of Hottentot origin, and in general possess the distinguishing features of that race, such as broad, flat noses, high cheek-bones, small, elephant eyes, thick lips, woolly hair, and other Hottentot peculiarities, which, in the present enlightened state of society, it were superfluous to enumerate. They are, however, so mixed up with crosses of other tribes that every ramification of breed between Boers, Bechuanas, Mosambiques, Corannas, Namaqua Hottentots, Bushmen, &c., may be found located within their territory. All of these intermarry. Some of them have long black hair, while the craniums of others, such as the Bushmen, are adorned with detached tufts of sickly-looking crisp wool, and the issue of such unions exhibit locks singularly varied.

Another tribe of men in every way similar to these Griquas inhabit an extensive and fertile country immediately to the east of their territory. These men term themselves Bastards. Their chief's name is Adam Kok. The name of their capital is Philipolis, a small village about thirty miles to the north of Colesberg. Their country is bounded on the south by the Great Orange River, and is about the most desirable district in Southern Africa for farming purposes, there being abundance of fountains throughout its whole extent capable of being led out to irrigate the land, without which no gardens can be formed, nor wheat grown, in that country. Rich pasture is abundant. Cattle and sheep thrive and breed remarkably well; goats also, an animal valuable to the South African settler, but for which only certain districts are suitable, are here very prolific. The goat in many districts is subject to a disease called by the Boers "brunt sickta," or burnt sickness, owing to the animals afflicted with it exhibiting the appearance of having been burnt. It is incurable; and if the animals infected are not speedily killed, or put out of the way, the contagion rapidly spreads, and it is not uncommon for a farmer to lose his entire flock with it. This sad distemper also extends itself to the *feræ naturæ*. I have shot hartebeests, black wildebeests, blesbucks, and springbucks, with their bodies covered with this disease. I have known seasons when the three latter animals were so generally affected by it, that the

vast plains throughout which they are found were covered with hundreds of skulls and skeletons of those that had died therefrom. One of the chief recommendations of the Bastards' country is its admirable suitableness for breeding horses. Large herds of these may be seen throughout their country pasturing high on the mountain sides, or scattered in troops over its grassy plains. The deadly distemper so prevalent along the frontiers of the colony is here of comparatively rare occurrence. In the far interior, however, it is so virulent during five or six months of the year, that it is often impossible to save a single horse, and through its ravages I was annually in the habit of losing the greater part of my stud.

The chiefs of the Griquas and Bastards are in close alliance with the English government, which protects them from the attacks of the rebel Dutch Boers. These, well aware of the excellent qualities of the Bastards' country, are possessed with a strong desire to appropriate it. The language spoken by both these tribes is Dutch. They have in general embraced the Christian religion, and several worthy missionaries have, for several years past, devoted their lives to the improvement of their temporal and eternal condition. The dress worn by the men consists of home-made leathern jacket, waistcoat, and trousers, feldtschoens, or home-made shoes, a Malay handkerchief tied round the head, and on Sundays and other great occasions a shirt and a neckcloth. The females wear a

close-fitting corset reaching to the small of the waist, below which they sport a petticoat like the women of other countries. These petticoats are sometimes made of stuffs of British manufacture, and at other times of soft leather prepared by themselves. Their head-dress consists of two handkerchiefs, one of black silk, the other of a striped red and green colour, usually termed Malay handkerchiefs, They are very fond of beads of every size and colour, which they hang in large necklaces round their necks. They have one description of bead peculiar to themselves and to the tribes extending along the banks of the Great Orange River to its junction with the sea. This bead is formed of the root of a bush found near the mouth of the Orange River, and possesses a sweet and peculiar perfume. Every Griqua girl wears at least one of these; and no traveller who has once learnt to prize this perfume can inhale it again without its inadvertently recalling to his memory the fine dark eyes and fair forms of the semi-civilized nymphs frequenting the northern bank of the Orange stream.

Their houses somewhat resemble a bee-hive or ant-hill, consisting of boughs of trees stuck into the ground in a circular form, and lashed down across one another overhead so as to form a framework, on which they spread large mats formed of reeds. These mats are also used instead of waggon-sails, and are very effectual in resisting both sun and rain. The diameter of these dome-shaped

huts varies from ten to fifteen feet. On changing their quarters, which they are occasionally compelled to do on account of pasture, it will easily be understood that they have little difficulty in removing their house along with them. A strong pack-ox can travel with the whole concern placed on his back ; and on occasions of their migration I have seen a pack-ox carrying not only its master's house on its back, but also a complete set of dairy utensils, all manufactured of wood, a couple of skin bags containing thick milk, various cooking utensils, and, surmounting all, the guidwife, with one or two of her children. They are all possessed of flocks and herds of goats, sheep, and cattle. A description of the houses and manner of living of these people may serve to convey an idea of all the tribes that border on the Vaal and Orange Rivers to the sea. They are, without exception, of an indolent disposition, and averse from hard work of any description. Much of their time is spent in hunting, and large parties annually leave their homes and proceed with their waggons, oxen, and horses on hunting expeditions into the far interior, absenting themselves for a period of from three to four months. They are a people remarkable for their disregard for truth, a weakness which I regret to state I found very prevalent in Southern Africa. They are also great beggars, generally commencing by soliciting for "trexels," a trexel being a pound of tea or coffee. Knowing the gallantry of our nation, they affirm this to

be a present for a wife or daughter, whom they represent as being poorly. If this is granted they continue their importunities, successively fancying your hat, neckcloth, or coat ; and I have known them on several occasions coolly request me to exchange my continuations for their leathern inexpressibles, which they had probably worn for a couple of summers.

When this party of Griquas came up to me, being anxious to see as much as possible of the natives of those parts which I traversed, I invited them to halt and drink coffee with me, an invitation which a Griqua was never yet known to decline. They informed me that, in the mountain ranges to the north-east, koodoo were to be met with, and they invited me to accompany them on their *chasse*. When breakfast was finished they sent their waggon in advance, with instructions to wait for their arrival at the fountain, where they intended to pitch their camp ; and, having saddled up, we all set forward and rode east to hunt koodoos and hartebeests, or any other game we might fall in with. After riding three or four miles, on approaching the base of the hills we entered an ancient forest of mimosas, every tree being a study for an artist. There was also a considerable undercover of various sweet-smelling shrubs and bushes. Here steinbok and duyker were abundant. This venerable forest extended all around the bases of various ranges of rocky hills which stretched in different directions through these

plains. Close in, at the foot of one of the hills, we discovered a Bushman residence, consisting of three small huts, each about four feet high, and about eight in diameter. They were formed of boughs of trees, thatched over with rank grass drawn up by the roots. The natives, as usual, had fled on our approach, and no living creature was to be seen. I entered each of the huts, and found lots of well "braid" (or dressed) skins of all the wild beasts of these parts. All their dishes were made either of ostrich-eggs or of the shells of land tortoises, and these were ranged round the floor on one side of the hut. Most of the ostrich-eggshells contained water.

We crossed the hills by a stony neck; and having proceeded some distance through several well-wooded glades and hollows in the table-land of the hills, we suddenly looked forth upon a noble prospect. A wide grassy plain, covered with picturesque mimosas and detached clumps of evergreen bushes, stretched away from the bases of the hills on which we stood. Beyond, the landscape was shut in by the bold and abrupt forms of rugged mountain ranges, which were coloured with a softened blue tint. Having descended into this fine picturesque plain, we held north, riding parallel with the hilly chain. Presently, my comrades adopting a course which did not strike me as the most likely to fall in with game, I chose a line of march for myself, and, following along under the mountain chain, I soon lost sight of them, and saw them no more

that day. On this occasion I had taken the field without any after-rider. Having ridden about a mile farther, I started a doe koodoo, the first I had seen, and shortly after I started another, with a young one, which I determined to secure, there being no flesh in our camp. Having pursued it a short distance, I came suddenly upon a troop of koodoos, consisting of three bucks and several does. Two of the bucks were old fellows, and carried magnificent, wide-set, long, spiral horns. To these I instantly directed my attention, when they at once made, as koodoos invariably do, for the adjacent rocky hills. Their pace was a succession of long bounds over the thorny bushes, which sadly distressed my poor steed. I nevertheless gained on them, and would have assuredly secured one, had they not reached a stony barrier of sharp, hard rocks, over which they disappeared, and where my horse could not follow. I was much struck with the noble appearance of these two buck koodoos, and felt very chagrined in having been unfortunate with them. Having lost the koodoos, I turned my face to the south, and rode along the skirts of the forest, in hope of falling in with my comrades.

I had ridden about a mile, when I suddenly perceived a gallant herd of nine old oryxes cantering towards me, all of them carrying horns of immense length and beauty, surpassing anything I had hitherto seen. They were preceded by four beautifully striped zebras, the first I

had met with, and followed by two brilliant red hartebeests. In half a minute I was flying along within sixty yards of the troop of oryxes, carefully studying the horns of each, and at a loss to decide which was the finest, they were all so very handsome. As I swept along I deplored my folly in having taken the field without my after-riders ; I nevertheless entertained hopes of success, as these antelopes had evidently been followed by the Griquas from whom I parted. They led me a long and severe chase along the skirts of the hills, the wind fortunately blowing right across them. After riding hard for several miles I felt my horse very much distressed, and was on the point of giving up the pursuit, when I observed one old bull make a momentary halt under a mimosa, evidently very much blown. This gave me fresh hope ; I resolved to follow him as long as my horse could go, and once more I gave chase with renewed speed. I was soon riding opposite to him, within sixty yards, with the hill on the other side, and by a desperate effort I managed to cut him off from his comrades, and turn his head down the wind. His fate was now sealed, and I at once felt that he was mine. From this moment his pace decreased, and, after another half-mile of sharp galloping down hill, in which I gained upon him at every stride, I was riding within fifteen yards of his handsome, round stern. His tongue was now hanging from his mouth, and long streaks of foam streamed back on his sides. Suddenly, on round-

ing a thorny bush, he pulled up in his career, and, facing about, stood at bay. I sprang breathless and worn out from my panting steed, and with a shaking hand sent a bullet through his shoulder, when he fell and breathed his last.

This noble oryx carried the finest horns I had met with, and I had, moreover, the satisfaction of knowing that he was the finest in the herd. Having off-saddled and knee-haltered my horse, I commenced cutting off the head of the oryx, which I accomplished with some trouble, the skin at the neck being an inch in thickness. I then broke thorny branches from a neighbouring mimosa, which I heaped over the carcase, to protect it from the vultures. This being accomplished, I returned to camp, carrying the head on the pommel of the saddle before me, and my rifle over my shoulder. On occasions like this I have often felt that I should have been the better for a third hand for the management of my steed. At an early hour on the following morning I left my waggons, accompanied by two after-riders, to look for koodoos, and secure the skin of the oryx of the preceding day. Contrary to my expectations, the hyænas had not discovered him. The flesh, however, owing to the heat of the weather, was unserviceable. I rode with my boys deployed into line along the likely part of the old mimosa forest, hoping to fall in with koodoos. Here I shot two fine old steinboks, with very good horns, and these I carefully preserved for

my collection. By firing I lost a chance of koodoos, as I presently discovered fresh spoor of a troop of these antelopes, which my shots had disturbed.

Returning towards my waggons, I rode through a gorge in the mountains where I had started a pack of about thirty wild dogs in the morning. Observing a number of vultures sitting on the rocks about the place from which the dogs had started, I at once knew that they had killed some animal ; and on riding up I discovered the skeleton of an old doe koodoo, which they had run into and consumed. They had not cracked the marrow-bones, which the hyænas would have done if left there till after sunset. These, therefore, my Hottentots hastily took possession of, the marrow of the thigh-bones of the koodoo being by them esteemed a great delicacy. Springing from their horses, they triumphantly seized the skeleton ; and, each selecting for himself a couple of stones, they sat down on the ground, cracked the marrow-bones, and greedily devoured their raw contents. On reaching the waggons we found an extremely ancient and shrivelled-looking Bushman, who chattered just like a monkey. He signed to me that I had visited his hut on the preceding day, but that he feared the Griquas who accompanied me. He also intimated that he feared the Boers ; but he knew from the appearance of my waggons that they belonged to an Englishman. He also signified to me that, when the moon should rise, blue wildebeests would come

and drink at "Stink Vonteyn." This fact I had already ascertained from personal observation, having seen their spoor by the water. In the evening having taken several cups of strong coffee to keep me awake, I walked to the fountain with four of my followers, bearing spades and pickaxe, and my bedding, to watch for wild animals. Having constructed a shooting-hole, my men retired, and I took up my position for the night, which was mild and lovely, with good moonlight. After watching several hours I fell asleep. About midnight my light sleep was disturbed by the tramp of approaching wild animals. I peeped from my hole, and saw a herd of about twenty shaggy blue wildebeests, or brindled gnoos, cautiously advancing to the water. They were preceded by a patriarchal old bull, the finest in the herd. I fired at him, and heard the ball tell upon his shoulder, upon which he and the whole troop galloped off in a northerly direction, enveloped in a cloud of red dust. Being thirsty, I then walked up to the eye of the fountain, and, having imbibed a draught of its sulphurous waters, in a very few minutes I was once more asleep.

On the 23rd I stood up in my hole at dawn of day, and, having donned my old grey kilt and Badenoch brogues, I took up the spoor of the herd of brindled gnoos. After I had proceeded a short distance I perceived the head of the old bull looking at me over a small rise on the bushy plain. The head disappeared, and I heard a loud noise

of tramping, as of an animal endeavouring to gallop upon three legs. On gaining this rise I again saw the handsome head, with its strangely-hooked, fair-set horns, gazing at me from the long grass some hundred yards in advance. He had lain down. I held as though I intended to go past him; but before I neared him he sprang to his feet, and endeavoured to make off from me. Poor old bull! I at once perceived that it was all over with him. He was very faint from loss of blood, and one fore leg was broken in the shoulder. He made a tottering run of about a hundred yards, and again lay down, never more to rise. I walked up to within eighty yards of him, and sent a bullet through his heart. Receiving the ball, he rolled over on his side, and expired without a groan. I then made for my waggons, and despatched men with a span or team of oxen to slip the wildebeest to camp. He afforded us a welcome supply of excellent flesh, as he was in fine condition. I breakfasted on an ostrich-egg, Kleinboy having found a nest the preceding day. He had unfortunately taken only eight of the eggs out of the nest, foolishly leaving the other twelve, which on his return he found smashed by the old birds, according to their usual custom.

CHAPTER VIII.

We leave Stink Vonteyn and reach the Vaal River — Wait-a-bit Thorns — Chase and kill a Buck Koodoo, and bivouac on the ground — Cobus and Jacob abscond — Roan Antelope — We recross the Vaal River — Griqua Encampment — Stink Vonteyn again — A Flight of Locusts — A Saltpan — Salubrious Climate — Boers attempt to carry off Ruyter — A Cameeldorn Forest — A Brindled Gnoo bayed by Wild Dogs — Habits of the latter.

On the evening of the 24th we inspanned, and, leaving "Stink Vonteyn," marched upon the Vaal River, distant about twenty-five miles. Our road lay through soft sand, rendering the work very severe for the oxen. About two A.M. on the following morning we reached the fair Vaal River by fine moonlight. Having sent mounted men through the stream to ascertain its depth, and finding a passage practicable, I resolved at once to cross it—a rule generally adopted by all experienced in the country, among whom a general maxim prevails never to defer the passage of a river if at all fordable when they reach it. Endless are the stories related by South African travellers, who, by failing to adopt this plan, have been compelled to remain for weeks, and even

months, on the banks of its various rivers. The current here being very powerful, I mounted the leaders of my teams, and in a few minutes my long double line of oxen was stoutly stemming the rapid stream, which reached half way up their sides. We got both the waggons across in safety. The water had just reached the bottom of my cargoes, but did not damage anything. The bank on the farther side was extremely steep and stony, and required every ox to exert himself to the utmost. The river here is very beautiful; broad and rapid streams are succeeded by long, deep, and tranquil pools, termed by the natives "zekoe ychots," signifying sea-cow or hippopotamus holes; these vast and wondrous amphibious animals having, not many years since, been plentiful along the entire length of the Vaal River. The hippopotamus, however, like the elephant, is of a very shy and secluded disposition, and rapidly disappears before the approach of civilization. I drew up my waggons on a commanding open position on the northern bank of the stream. The margin of the Vaal, like the Orange River, is richly clad with dense groves of various evergreen trees, among which drooping willows predominate, whose long waving fringes dip gracefully into the limpid waters as they glide along in their seaward course. All along the banks of both these rivers huge trunks of trees are strewn, having been borne thither by the mighty floods to which they are annually subject. A short distance above my

position was a beautiful island, adorned with trees of the richest verdure.

About three P.M. I rode north-east to look for roan antelopes, which, next to the eland, are the largest in the world ; and being incapable of great speed, may at times be ridden into with a good horse. I was accompanied by Cobus and Jacob. We found the country covered with bushes, of which the majority were of a most impracticable description, reminding me of a kill-devil, an implement used in angling, they being covered with thorns on the fish-hook principle. This variety of mimosa is waggishly termed by the Boers "vyacht um bige," or wait-a-bit thorns, as they continually solicit the passing traveller not to be in a hurry ; if he disregards which request, the probability is that he leaves a part of his shirt or trowsers in their possession. Here and there were hills covered with sharp adamantine rocks, throughout which, however, there was abundance of excellent grass and fine green bushes. In short, it was just the country to suit the taste of the rock-loving koodoos. Having proceeded some miles, we discovered fresh spoor of a troop of them at the foot of one of the ranges of rocky hills. We then crossed the ridge, still finding spoor, and the country becoming more and more likely.

Suddenly, on raising our eyes, we saw standing on the hill side, within three hundred yards of us, five buck koodoos, four of which were tearing old fellows carrying extremely

fine horns ; and majestic as they were, the elevated position which they occupied imparted to them a still more striking appearance. We galloped towards them, on which they bounded higher up the rocky hill, and stood for a few seconds looking at us.

I had seen many sights thrilling to a sportsman, but few to surpass what I then beheld. I think an old buck koodoo, when seen standing broadside on, is decidedly one of the grandest-looking antelopes in the world. They now broke into two lots, the two finest bucks holding to the left, and to these we gave chase. They led us over the most terrific ground for horses that can be imagined. It consisted of a mass of large sharp adamantine pieces of rock ; even the rock-frequenting koodoos themselves made bad weather of it. Cobus, on this occasion, rode in a manner which astonished me. He was mounted on "The Cow," which steed, having in its youth led an unrestrained life, as most Cape horses do, in the rugged mountains of the Hantam, bounded along the hill side in a style worthy of a klipspringer. A flat of considerable extent, covered with tall bushes, intervened between us and a long range of high table-land to the northward, along the base of which, for an extent of many miles, stretched a dense forest of wait-a-bit thorns and mimosas. This forest was the head-quarters of the koodoos, and for it they now held, breaking away across the above-mentioned flat. That forest, however, the finest koodoo was

destined never to reach. As soon as we got clear of the rocky ground our horses gained upon them at every stride ; and Cobus, who was invariably far before me in every chase, was soon alongside of the finest. Here, in the dense bushes, we lost sight of his comrade. Cobus very soon prevailed on the koodoo to alter his tack, and strike off at a tangent from his former course ; when, by taking a short cut like a greyhound running cunning, I got within range, and with a single ball I rolled him over in the dust. I felt more pleasure in obtaining this fine specimen of a buck koodoo than anything I had yet shot in Africa. He was a first-rate old buck, and carried a pair of ponderous, long, wide-set spiral horns.

Owing to the nature of the ground which they frequent, it is a very difficult matter to ride them down, and they are more usually obtained by stalking or stealing stealthily upon them. When, however, the hunter discovers a heavy old buck koodoo on level ground, there is no great difficulty to ride into him, his speed and endurance being very inferior to that of the oryx. I could have stood contemplating him for hours, but darkness was fast setting in ; so, having off-saddled and knee-haltered our horses, we carefully removed the head and commenced skinning him. The skin of the koodoo, though thin, is extremely tough, and is much prized by the colonists for "foreslocks," or lashes for ox-waggon whips. The koodoo-skin was my mattress, my saddle was my pillow ; and supperless I lay

down to rest, without any covering save an old shirt and a pair of leather crackers. The excitement of the thrilling sport which I had enjoyed prevented my sleeping until a late hour; and when at length I closed my eyes, I dreamt that we were surrounded by a troop of lions, and, awaking with a loud cry, startled my men and horses.

On the 26th we arose at earliest dawn, and having packed the trophies of the koodoo, and a part of his flesh, upon my spare horse, I despatched Jacob with him to camp, while Cobus and I held north-east to seek for roan antelope. I sought that day and the two following for these antelopes, but saw no traces of them.

On the morning of the 30th I inspanned, and trekked some miles farther up the northern bank of the Vaal, and encamped opposite where the Riet or Reed River joins it. The stream here is extremely beautiful, being about a hundred and fifty yards in breadth, with sloping banks richly adorned with shady evergreen groves, and fringed with lofty reeds—a never-failing prognosticator of a sleepless night, a virulent species of mosquito being always abundant where reeds are met with. Several large bustards were stalking on a small bushy flat, as we drew up the waggons. I went after these, and made a fine off-hand shot at an old cock at a hundred and fifty yards. Here I lost Cobus and Jacob, my two Hottentot after-riders. Returning from the bustards to my waggons, where I expected to find my breakfast waiting me,

I discovered these two worthies, whose duty it was to be preparing it, quietly reclining under the shade of a mimosa, and enjoying the soothing influence of their short clay pipes. Being now beyond the pale of magisterial law, I deemed that a little wholesome correction might prove beneficial, which I accordingly administered. This so disgusted these high-minded youths, that after breakfast they embraced the opportunity of my bathing to abscond from my service. I imagined that they had sneaked into the bushes, and would soon return. I, however, saw no more of them until several months after, when I met them at Colesberg, which place they had reached, assisted by the Bastards, through whose country they had passed. Cobus, though a first-rate after-rider, was a great scamp and mischief-maker; and I learned from my remaining people that it was by his persuasion Jacob had left me.

In the forenoon, the sun being extremely powerful, I built for myself a bower under an old willow beside the river. In this bower I made my bed, and might have had a sound sleep by way of a change, had not the mosquitos and midges assaulted me throughout the whole night, so that I hardly closed my eyes. The 31st was a charming cool day, the sky beautifully overcast. Having enjoyed a good swim in the waters of the Vaal, I breakfasted, after which I saddled up, and rode north to seek for roan antelope. I was accompanied by Carollus, the native of Mozambique, who was much too heavy to act as after-rider, and

by the little Bushboy named Ruyter, who had joined me on the plains of the karroo. This Bushboy, although he had learnt to ride among the Boers, had an indifferent seat on horseback, and would never push his horse to overtake any antelope if the ground were at all rough.

Having explored the country to a considerable distance, in the course of which we fell in with four sassaybys and a troop of hartebeests, I resolved to make for home, as the darkening sky and distant thunder to the southward threatened a heavy storm. I had not long, however, determined on returning, when the wind, which had been out of the north, suddenly veered round, and blew hard from the south. In less than half an hour the rain descended in torrents, the wind blew extremely cold, and the rain beat right in my face; the peals of thunder were most appalling, the most fearful I think I had ever heard, the forked lightning dancing above and around me with such vividness as to pain my eyes: I thought every moment would be my last. I shifted my saddle from "Sunday" to "The Cow," and we pricked along at a smart pace. We were entering a thicket of thorny bushes, when a very large grey-looking antelope stood up under one of them. I could not see his head, but I at once knew that it was the long-sought-for roan antelope, or bastard gemsbok. Carollus quickly handed me my little Moore rifle, secure from the pelting storm in one of Mr. Hugh Snowie's patent waterproof covers. The noble buck now bounded

forth, a superb old male, carrying a pair of grand scymitar-shaped horns. He stood nearly five feet high at the shoulder. "The Cow" knew well what he had to do, and set off after him with right good will over a most impracticable country. It was a succession of masses of adamantine rock and stone, and dense bushes with thorns on the boat-hook principle. In a few minutes my legs below the knee were a mass of blood, and my shirt, my only covering, was flying in streamers from my waist. The old buck at first got a little ahead, but presently, the ground improving, I gained upon him, and after a sharp burst of about two miles we commenced ascending a slight acclivity, when he suddenly faced about and stood at bay, eyeing me with glowing eyes and a look of defiance. This was to me a joyful moment. The buck I had for many years heard of and longed to meet now stood at bay within forty yards of me. I dismounted, and, drawing my rifle from its holster, sent a bullet through his shoulder, upon which he cantered a short distance and lay down beside a bush. On my approach he endeavoured to charge, but his strength failed him. I then gave him a second shot in the neck, just where I always cut off the head. On receiving it he rolled over, and, stretching his limbs, closed his eyes upon the storm, which all this time raged with increasing severity.

I felt extremely cold. I had lost my shirt in the chase, and all that was left me was my shoes and leather

knee-breeches. I nevertheless took some time to inspect the beautiful and rare antelope which I had been fortunate enough to capture. He proved to be a first-rate specimen : his horns were extremely rough and finely knotted. I now proceeded to cut off his head and "gralloched" him, all of which I accomplished before my followers came up. They stumbled on me by chance, having lost sight of me in the denseness of the storm. Having shifted my saddle from "The Cow" to "Colesberg," I ordered them to follow, and I rode hard for camp, which was distant many miles. At sunset the storm ceased, and my boys arrived with the head. The following day was the 1st of February. In the morning I despatched two men to bring home the skin of the roan antelope and a supply of the venison, which was in high condition. Strange to say, they found the buck all safe, having escaped the attacks both of hyænas and vultures.

My meal-bag was reported almost empty; and this being a dangerous country for the horse-sickness, a distemper which rages during February, March, and April, I resolved to recross the Vaal River, and bend my course for the land of blesboks, a large and beautiful violet-coloured antelope, which is found, together with black wildebeests and springboks, in countless thousands on the vast green plains of short sour grass situated about a hundred and fifty miles to the eastward of my then position. My purpose was to amuse myself hunting in

these parts until the beginning of April, when the most dangerous period of the horse-sickness would be past ; and after that to revisit Colesberg, where I intended to store the specimens of natural history which I had already accumulated, and, having refitted and laid in a store of supplies, to start for the remote districts of the far interior in quest of elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, buffalo, eland, and other varieties of large and interesting game to be found in those secluded regions. Before removing from my present encampment I had another hard day among the sharp rocks and wait-a-bit thorns to the northward of the Vaal, when I fell in with a troop of about twelve young ostriches, which were not much larger than guinea-fowls. I was amused to see the mother endeavour to lead us away exactly like a wild duck, spreading out and drooping her wings, and throwing herself down on the ground before us as if wounded, while the cock bird cunningly led the brood away in an opposite direction.

On the afternoon of the 3rd of February we inspanned, and retraced our steps to the drift, which we reached in the dark : I however crossed the river and encamped on the opposite bank. On the following day I marched to a small kraal of Griquas, in hope of obtaining some corn. Our march was a heavy one, through a sandy country adorned in parts with very ancient-looking, picturesque trees of the "cameel-dorn" species. From the site of

these kraals I obtained a distant view of both the Vaal and Orange River. I found these Griquas very importunate, flocking round my waggons and begging for tea, coffee, tobacco, gunpowder, &c. Some of these ruffians formed a plot to make me give up the Bushboy who had entered my service, but, on my threatening them with the vengeance of Government if they interfered with any men in my service, they relinquished the idea. On the morrow it was ascertained that the oxen, having missed the fountain, had wandered very far in search of water: they were recovered more than half way back to the Vaal River. I purchased eight "emirs" or measures of wheat from one of the Griquas, and also a couple of goats for slaughter. In the afternoon we inspanned, and trekked to "Stink Vonteyn," already mentioned. On the march I shot a large hawk, a species of buzzard, with ball, and also a steinbok, at a hundred and sixty yards. On the following morning the Namaqua partridges, which every morning and evening visit the vleys and fountains in large coveys for the purpose of drinking, mustered in great force at "Stink Vonteyn." Of these birds I have met with three varieties. They are abundant wherever extensive open sandy districts occur, as far as I have penetrated into Southern Africa. By watching the flight of these birds in the mornings and evenings I have discovered the fountains in the desert, when unassisted and forsaken by the natives. As they fly they repeatedly utter a soft melodious cry,

resembling the words "pretty, pretty dear." They are excellent eating, and a person so disposed, by mounting a pair of shot-barrels, might, any morning or evening, secure a large bag of them.

In the forenoon I observed the base of an extensive range of hills to the northward concealed for miles, as if by thick clouds or mist, which steadily advanced towards us, holding a southerly course. This was a flight of countless myriads of locusts, in my opinion one of the most remarkable phenomena that a traveller can behold. They resembled very much a fall of snow, when it gently descends in large light flakes. The sound caused by their wings reminded me of the rustling of the summer breeze among the trees of the forest. In the afternoon I hunted in a mountain range to the westward of the saltpan named by the Boers and Bastards "Sautpan's berg;" and in the evening I visited the old Bushman's hut, whom I found at home with a litter of very small Bush-children: these he signified to me were his grandchildren. I lay down to sleep beneath an aged mimosa in their vicinity, and about midnight the wind set in from off the Southern Ocean, and, having no covering but my shirt, I felt it piercingly cold. Sleep was out of the question, and I was right glad when I heard the sparrow's chirp announcing the dawn of day. Notwithstanding these nocturnal exposures, my health since leaving my regiment had been perfect—not a twitch of rheumatism,

a complaint from which I suffered while in India, although I had ceased to wear flannel, which I had previously done for years : I can therefore confidently recommend the country to those that suffer from that most grievous affliction. Colds, coughs, and sore throats are of rare occurrence ; and scientific persons, in whose opinions I can place the utmost reliance, have informed me that the frontier districts of the colony, and still more the remoter districts to the northward, are the finest in the world for persons labouring under any pulmonary complaint. At times I felt very lonely when I returned to camp for want of some old companion to welcome me and discuss with me in the evenings, over my gipsy fire, the adventures and incidents of the day : in general, however, when the sport was good I enjoyed excellent spirits.

On reaching my waggons I breakfasted, after which we inspanned and trekked east along a very rarely trodden old waggon-track, making for a small fountain situated on the borders of a large pan, which lay in a broad hollow in the centre of an extensive open tract of undulating country. Here the entire country was of a soft sandy character, and utterly uninhabited ; the plains were covered with long rough heath and other low scrubby bushes, intermingled with much sweet grass. Ranges of hills of goodly height and considerable extent intersected the plains, and bounded the view at various distances on every side. Ancient forests of picturesque

and venerable mimosas, interspersed with high grey-leaved bushes, detached and in groups, stretched along the bases of these mountain-ranges, their breadth extending about a mile into the surrounding extensive campaign country. We reached the small fountain in the dark, our road leading through the saltpan, where we halted for an hour, for the purpose of collecting salt, with which we had little difficulty in filling two large sacks.

On the march, as we crossed a vast plain, a flight of locusts passed over our heads during upwards of half an hour, flying so thick as to darken the sun; they reached in dense clouds as far as we could see, and maintained an elevation of from six to three or four hundred feet above the level of the plain. Woe to the vegetation of the country on which they alight! In the afternoon two mounted Boers were observed leading a spare horse, and following on our track. While they were yet afar off, Ruyter, the little Bushboy, recognised them as old acquaintances, and pronounced one of them to be the brother of the master from whom he had absconded. I at once guessed the object of their visit, and was right in my conjecture. By some clue they had ascertained that the boy was in my possession, and were now following me in the hope of recovering him. Accordingly, when they rode up and requested me to halt the waggons for a conference, I received them very gruffly, and replied, that, the water being distant, I had

no time for conferences until I should arrive there. Having repeated their request, and finding that I paid them no regard, they took up a position in the rear, and followed my waggons to the halting-place. Here they began to pester me with a long yarn concerning their claims to the Bushboy, when I stopped their pratings by ordering them to drop the subject, promising them a hearing in the morning; and having directed my people to place refreshments before the Boers, I wished them good night, and retired.

On the following morning they renewed their importunities, stating many things which I knew to be false; upon which I informed them that the nation to which I belonged was averse to slavery, and that I could not think of acceding to their demand. They then saddled up, and departed as wise as they had come, telling me that the matter should not rest there. The little Bushman seemed highly amused with the whole proceeding; and as the Boers mounted their steeds and rode away, leading the spare horse, he shrieked with delight, exclaiming in Low Dutch, "Yah, yilla' forfluxta Boera, yilla had de chadachta me te chra, mar ik heb noo a ghroote baas, dat sall yilla neuk;" signifying "Yes, you worthless Boers, you thought to get hold of me; but I have now a great master, who will serve you out." The Boers having departed, and my oxen and horses having effaced all original traces around the fountain, I described a circle a little

distance from it to ascertain if it was much frequented. This is the manner in which spoor should at all times be sought for. I found a tolerable abundance of the spoor of various wild animals, and I therefore resolved to remain here some days for the purpose of hunting. I removed my waggons to an adjacent hollow, where I drew them up entirely concealed from view, and then constructed a shooting-hole beside the fountain, where for several mornings, at early dawn, I shot hartebeests as they came to drink.

On the morning of the 12th I rode north-east with attendants, and after proceeding several miles through an open country we entered a beautiful forest of cameeldorn trees, and rode along beneath a range of steep rocky hills. The country gave me the idea of extreme antiquity, where the hand of man had wrought no change since the Creation. In a finely-wooded broad valley or opening among the hills we fell in with a magnificent herd of about sixty blue wildebeests. As they cantered across the grassy sward, tossing their fierce-looking, ponderous heads, their shaggy manes and long, black, bushy tails streaming in the breeze, they presented an appearance at once striking and imposing; and to a stranger they conveyed rather the idea of buffaloes than anything belonging to the antelope tribe, to which, indeed, wildebeests, both black and white, are but remotely allied, notwithstanding the classification of naturalists. Returning to camp with the trophies of a hartebeest, of which

antelope I discovered several fine troops, I started a strand wolfe, or fuscous hyæna, which I rode into and slew.

About midnight on the 16th, weary with tossing on my restless couch, I arose, and taking my two-grooved rifle, a pillow, and a blanket, I held for my shooting-hole beside the fountain. The remainder of the night was very cool, with a southerly breeze. At dawn I looked from my hole, and, seeing no game approaching, I rolled my blanket tight around me and tried to sleep. In this manner I had lain for about half an hour, when I was suddenly startled by a large heavy animal galloping past within six feet of me. I at once knew that it must be either some beast which had been coming to drink and had got my wind, or one hunted, which, according to the custom of deer and the larger antelopes, had rushed for refuge to the water in its distress. In the latter conjecture I was right; for, on cautiously peeping through the stones which surrounded my hole, I had the pleasure to behold a fine bull brindled gnoo dash into the waters of the fountain within forty yards of me, and stand at bay, followed by four tearing, fierce-looking wild dogs. All the four had their heads and shoulders covered with blood, and looked savage in the extreme. They seemed quite confident of success, and came leisurely up to the bull, passing within a few yards of me, their eyes glistening with ferocious glee.

My anxiety to possess this fine old bull, and also a specimen of the wild dog, prevented my waiting to see

more of the fun. I deliberated for a few seconds whether I would shoot the bull first or one of the hounds, and ended by shooting the gnoo and the largest hound right and left. The bull, on receiving the ball, bounded out of the fountain; but suddenly wheeling about, he re-entered it, and, staggering violently for a moment, subsided in its waters. The hound got the bullet through his heart, and, springing forward from his comrades, instantly measured his length upon the gravel. I then quickly reloaded my rifle, lying on my side—a proceeding which, I may inform those who have not yet tried it, is rather difficult to accomplish. Whilst I was thus occupied the three remaining hounds reluctantly withdrew, and described a semicircle to leeward of me for the purpose of obtaining my wind and more correctly ascertaining the cause of their discomfiture. Having loaded, I reopened my fire, and wounded another, when they all made off.

I could not help feeling very reluctant to fire at the jolly hounds. The whole affair reminded me so very forcibly of many gallant courses I had enjoyed in the Scottish deer forests with my own noble deer-hounds, that I could not divest myself of the idea that those now before me deserved a better recompense for the masterly manner in which they were pursuing their desperate game. One hound in particular bore a strong expression of dear old Factor in his face, a trusty stag-hound bred by myself, whose deeds, though not renowned in verse like Ossian's

Oscar and Luath, were perhaps little inferior either in speed or prowess to those famed in ancient song.¹

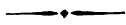
¹ The wild dogs, or "wilde honden," as they are termed by the Dutch Boers, are still abundant in the precincts of the Cape colony, and are met with in great numbers throughout the interior. These animals invariably hunt together in large organized packs, varying in number from ten to sixty, and by their extraordinary powers of endurance, and mode of mutual assistance, they are enabled to run into the swiftest, or overcome the largest and most powerful antelope. I have never heard of their attacking the buffalo, and I believe that the animal pursued in the present instance is the largest to which they give battle. Their pace is a long never-tiring gallop, and in the chase they relieve one another, the leading hounds falling to the rear when fatigued, when others, who have been husbanding their strength, come up and relieve them. Having succeeded in bringing their quarry to bay, they all surround him, and he is immediately dragged to the ground, and in a few minutes torn to pieces and consumed. They are of a bold and daring disposition, and do not entertain much fear of man, evincing less concern on his approach than any other carnivorous animal with which I am acquainted. On disturbing a pack, they trot leisurely along before the intruder, repeatedly halting and looking back at him. The females bring forth their young in large holes, in desolate open plains. These burrows are connected with one another underground. When a troop of wild dogs frequenting these holes observe a man approaching, they do not, as might be supposed, take shelter in the holes, but, rather trusting to their speed, they rush forth, even though the intruder should be close upon them, and retreat across the plain, the young ones, unless very weak, accompanying them. The devastation occasioned by them among the flocks of the pastoral Dutch Boers is inconceivable. It constantly happens that when the careless shepherds leave their charge, in quest of honey or other amusement, a pack of these marauders comes across the defenceless flock. A sanguinary massacre in such cases invariably ensues, and incredible numbers

Having summoned my men, and with considerable difficulty dragged the ponderous carcase of the old bull out of the water, we found that he had been cruelly lacerated by the hounds. It appeared to me that they had endeavoured to hamstring him. His hind legs, haunches, and belly were dreadfully torn ; he had lost half his tail, and

of sheep are killed and wounded. The voracious pack, not contented with killing as many as they can eat, follow resolutely on, tearing and mangling all that come within their reach. Their voice consists of three different kinds of cry, each being used on special occasions. One of these cries is a sharp angry bark, usually uttered when they suddenly behold an object which they cannot make out. Another resembles a number of monkeys chattering together, or men conversing while their teeth are chattering violently from cold. This cry is emitted at night when large numbers of them are together, and they are excited by any particular occurrence, such as being barked at by domestic dogs. The third cry, and the one most commonly uttered by them, is a sort of rallying note to bring the various members of the pack together when they have been scattered in following several individuals of a troop of antelopes. It is a peculiarly soft melodious cry, yet, nevertheless, it may be distinguished at a great distance. It very much resembles the second note uttered by the cuckoo which visits our islands during the summer months, and, when heard in a calm morning echoing through the distant woodlands, it has a very pleasing effect. They treat all domestic dogs, however large and fierce, with the utmost scorn, waiting to receive their attack, and then, clanishly assisting one another, they generally rend them in pieces. The domestic dogs most cordially reciprocate their animosity, and abhor their very voices, at what distance soever heard, even more than that of the lion, starting to their feet, and angrily barking for hours. This interesting though destructive animal seems to form the connecting link between the wolf and the hyæna.

was otherwise mutilated. Poor old bull ! I could not help commiserating his fate. It is melancholy to reflect that, in accordance with the laws of nature, such scenes of pain must ever be occurring ; one species, whether inhabiting earth, air, or ocean, being produced to become the prey of another. At night I watched the water, with fairish moonlight, and shot a large spotted hyæna.

I continued here hunting hartebeests until the 21st, when I inspanned at an early hour and trekked due east till sundown, when I halted near a small fountain of fine water, having performed a march of about twenty-five miles. Our road lay through a wild uninhabited country, producing sweet grass in abundance, but destitute of water. On the morning of the 22nd, having breakfasted, I rode south-west, with after-riders, and found the game abundant, but wild and shy, having been recently hunted by Boers.



CHAPTER IX.

The Riet River—Nomade Boer Encampments—Surly Reception at a Boer's Farm—Lions slain by the Boers—Cowardice of the Boers in Lion-hunting—Rumours of War between the Boers and Griquas—The Mirage of the Plains—Habits of the Blesbok—A knowing old Hog—A Snake under my Pillow—A Troop of Wild Dogs come upon me at night in my Shooting-hole—The Roar of Lions—Curious Facts concerning them.

WE inspanned before the dawn of day on the 23rd of February, and after steering east and by north for a distance of about twelve miles we found ourselves on the southern bank of the Riet river, where we outspanned. Along the banks, both above and below me, several families of the nomade Boers were encamped with their tents and waggons. Their overgrown flocks and herds were grazing on the plains and grassy hill-sides around. Five of these Boers presently came up to my waggons, and drank coffee with me. They seemed much amused with the details of my sporting adventures, which I was now able to give them in broken Dutch, in which language, from lately hearing no other spoken, I was daily becoming more proficient. On learning that I had not as yet enjoyed any blesbok shooting, they said they were certain I should be

delighted with the sport. The borders of the country inhabited by the bleaboks they stated to be about four days distant in a north-easterly direction, and that on reaching it I should fall in with those antelopes in countless herds, along with black wildebeest, springbok, and other game. The Boers supplied me liberally with milk. In the height of the day we all bathed in the Riet river, and in the afternoon I continued my journey eastward. The breadth of the Riet river here is about thirty yards. It rises about one hundred miles to the eastward, and, flowing westerly, joins the Vaal river opposite Campbell's dorp.

On the third day after making the Riet river we crossed below a very picturesque waterfall, and resumed our march along its northern bank. The day was cool and pleasant, the sky overcast; the hot days of summer were now past, and the weather was most enjoyable. Continuing my march in the afternoon, I left the Riet river on my right, and held on through an open sandy country richly covered with abundance of sweet grass, and intersected by mountain ranges of very considerable extent. At sunset I encamped beside a Boer's farm, who received me hospitably, and asked me to dine with him. During dinner, according to the custom of the Boers, he pestered me with a thousand questions, such as, What was my nation? Where was I from? Where was I bound for? Why I travelled about alone in such a manner. Where was my farm? Were my father and mother living?

How many brothers and sisters I had? Was I married? And had I never been married in the whole course of my life? On my replying in the negative to this last question, the Boer seemed petrified with astonishment, and the family gazed at one another in utter amazement. On the farm was a fine specimen of the African wild boar, which was perfectly tame, and took vegetables from the hands of the children. On the following day I performed two long marches, and again halted on the farm of a Boer, whose name was Potcheter. I found this man particularly bitter against the Government. On my going up to him to inquire where I should outspan, he was very surly, and would scarcely deign to speak to me. Of this, however, I took no notice, but took the liberty of informing him that when I had outspanned I should come up to the house and make the acquaintance of Mrs. Potcheter. As I wheeled about and walked away from him, I overheard him remark to three other gruff-looking Boers who stood beside him that I was "a verdomd Englishman."

Notwithstanding this cold reception, on returning to the house I soon managed to get into their good graces, and took dinner with them. During dinner the conversation turned on politics, when a keen discussion arose concerning the present administration of the government. This being at all times a disagreeable subject, I thought it time to change the conversation to sporting subjects,

in which the Boers always take intense interest. I accordingly mentioned to one of the young ladies who sat next to me, that I had in my waggon a large work containing engravings of all the most interesting animals in the world ; on which she instantly expressed a strong desire to see it. I then produced my 'Museum of Animated Nature,' which never failed to enchant the Boers, and to put an end to all political discussions ; shooting and wild animals engrossing the conversation during the rest of the evening. These Boers informed me that I should see herds of blesboks on the following day. They also stated that lions frequented the bushy mountain ranges which look down upon the plains frequented by the blesboks, and they mentioned that a considerable party of Boers had mustered that day upon a farm a few miles in advance, to hunt a troop of lions which had killed some horses on the preceding day. From the conversation which I overheard among themselves, I learnt that a war was brewing between the emigrant Boers on the northern bank of the Orange River and the Bastard and Griqua tribes. The rumour of this war threw my followers, who also heard the news from the servants of the Boers, into a state of great alarm. I resolved, however, that my movements should not be influenced by these reports.

At an early hour on the following morning a young Boer rode up to the farm, and informed us that the party who had been lion-hunting on the preceding day had

bagged two fine lions, a male and female. As the farm lay directly in my line of march, I mounted Colesberg, and, directing my followers to follow with the waggons, I rode hard for the farm, to inspect the noble game. On my way thither I met a horse-waggon, drawn by eight horses, containing some of the party who had mustered for the battue. Arriving on the farm, I found the lion and lioness laid out on the grass in front of the house, and the Boers' Hottentots busy skinning them. Both lions were riddled with balls, and their heads were shot all to pieces. This is generally the way in which the Boers serve their lions after they have killed them, fearing to approach, though dead, until they have expended a further supply of ammunition. A Hottentot is then ordered to approach and throw a stone at him; the Boers then ask if he is dead, and on the Hottentot replying, "Like so, baas," he is ordered to pull him by the tail before the hunters will venture to approach. My little Bushman informed me that he had often been out lion-hunting during his captivity with the Boers. On one of these occasions a Boer, who had dismounted from his horse to fire, was dashed to the ground by the lion before he could regain his saddle. The brute, however, did not injure him, but merely stood over him, lashing his tail, and growling at the rest of the party, who had galloped to a distance in the utmost consternation, and, instead of approaching within easy shot

of the lion, to the rescue of their comrade, opened their fire upon him from a great distance, the consequence of which sportsmanlike proceeding was, that they missed the lion, and shot their comrade dead on the spot. The lion presently retreated, and, none daring to follow him, he escaped.

The Boer on whose farm I had arrived was a tall, powerful, manly-looking fellow. He informed me that he was a Dane. He was in great distress about two favourite dogs which the lions had killed during the attack on the preceding day. Three more were badly wounded, and their recovery seemed doubtful. He confirmed the reports of an impending war between the Boers and Griquas, which I had previously heard, and he asked me if I was not afraid, in times of war, to remain hunting, with only a few followers, in the wilderness. Being anxious to commence my operations against the blesboks, I resumed my march shortly after mid-day. On taking leave, the Dane presented me with some meal and a couple of loaves of bread, a luxury to which I had been an utter stranger for many months, and which, together with vegetables, I may further add I hardly ever tasted during the five hunting expeditions which I performed in Southern Africa. Another short march in a north-easterly direction brought me to the western borders of the boundless regions inhabited by the blesboks. I drew up my waggons beside a vley of rain-water, in open country, the plains

before me being adorned with herds of black wildebeest, springbok, and blesbok.

I had now reached the borders of a country differing entirely from any I had hitherto seen. The sweet grass, which had heretofore been so abundant, became very scarce, being succeeded by short, crisp, sour pasturage, which my cattle and horses refused to eat. A supply of forage for these, however, could generally be obtained by driving them to the stony hillocks and rocky mountain ranges which at various distances from one another intersected the campaign country. The plains were firm and hard, and admirably suited for riding ; they were pastured short and bare by the endless herds of game which from time immemorial had held possession of these extensive domains. Although intersected occasionally by mountain ranges, these plains often extend to amazing distances, without any landmark to break the monotony of their boundless and ocean-like expanse. At other times the eye is relieved by one or more abrupt pyramidal or cone-shaped hills, which serve as a landmark to the hunter, whereby to regain his encampment after the excitement of the chase.

When the sun is powerful, which it is during the greater part of the year, an enduring mirage dances on the plain wherever the hunter turns his bewildered eyes. This mirage restricts the range of vision to a very moderate distance, and is very prejudicial to correct rifle-shooting.

The effect produced by this optical illusion is remarkable : hills and herds of game often appear as if suspended in mid-air. Dry and sun-baked vleys, or pans covered with a crystallized efflorescence, constantly delude the thirsty traveller with the prospect of water ; and more than once I have ridden towards a couple of springboks, magnified a hundred-fold, which I had mistaken for the white tilts of my waggons. This vast tract of bare, sour pasturage, which is peculiarly the inheritance of the black wildebeest, the springbok, and the blesbok, but more particularly of the latter, occupies a central position, as it were, in Southern Africa. On the west of my present encampment, as far as the shores of the South Atlantic Ocean, no blesboks are to be found. Neither do they extend to the northward of the latitude of the river Molopo, in $25^{\circ} 30'$, of which I shall at a future period make mention, although their herds frequent the plains along its southern bank. To the south a few small herds are still to be found within the colony, but their head-quarters is to the northward of the Orange River ; whence they extend in an easterly direction throughout all the vast plains situated to the west of the Witbergen range.

The blesbok, in his manners and habits, very much resembles the springbok, which, however, it greatly exceeds in size, being as large as an English fallow-deer. It is one of the true antelopes, and all its movements and paces partake of the grace and elegance peculiar to that

species. Its colour is similar to that of the sassayby, its skin being beautifully painted with every shade of purple, violet, and brown. Its belly is of the purest white, and a broad white band, or "blaze," adorns the entire length of its face. Blesboks differ from springboks in the determined and invariable manner in which they scour the plains, right in the wind's eye, and also in the manner in which they carry their noses close along the ground. Throughout the greater part of the year they are very wary and difficult of approach, but more especially when the does have young ones. At that season, when one herd is disturbed, and takes away up the wind, every other herd in view follows them; and the alarm extending for miles and miles down the wind, to endless herds beyond the vision of the hunter, a continued stream of blesboks may often be seen scouring up wind for upwards of an hour, and covering the landscape as far as the eye can see. The springboks, which in equal numbers frequent the same ground, do not in general adopt the same decided course as the blesboks, but take away in every direction across the plains, sometimes with flying bounds, beautifully exhibiting the long, snowy-white hair with which their backs are adorned, and at others walking slowly and carelessly out of the hunter's way, scarcely deigning to look at him, with an air of perfect independence, as if aware of their own matchless speed.

The black wildebeests, which also thickly cover the entire length and breadth of the blesbok country, in herds averaging from twenty to fifty, have no regular course, like the blesboks. Unless driven by a large field of hunters, they do not leave their ground, although disturbed. Wheeling about in endless circles, and performing the most extraordinary variety of intricate evolutions, the shaggy herds of these eccentric and fierce-looking animals are for ever capering and gambolling round the hunter on every side. While he is riding hard to obtain a family shot of a herd in front of him, other herds are charging down wind on his right and left, and, having described a number of circular movements, they take up positions upon the very ground across which the hunter rode only a few minutes before.

Singly, and in small troops of four or five individuals, the old bull wildebeests may be seen stationed at intervals throughout the plains, standing motionless during a whole forenoon, coolly watching with a philosophic eye the movements of the other game, eternally uttering a loud snorting noise, and also a short, sharp cry which is peculiar to them. When the hunter approaches these old bulls, they commence whisking their long white tails in a most eccentric manner; then springing suddenly into the air, they begin prancing and capering, and pursue each other in circles at their utmost speed. Suddenly they all pull up together, to overhaul the intruder, when two

of the bulls will often commence fighting in the most violent manner, dropping on their knees at every shock ; then quickly wheeling about, they kick up their heels, whirl their tails with a fantastic flourish, and scour across the plain enveloped in a cloud of dust.

Throughout the greater part of the plains frequented by blesboks, numbers of the sun-baked hills or mounds of clay formed by the white ants occur. The average height of the ant-hills, in these districts, is from two to three feet. They are generally distant from one another from one to three hundred yards, being more or less thickly placed in different parts. These ant-hills are of the greatest service to the hunter, enabling him with facility to conceal himself on the otherwise open plain. By means of them I was enabled to hide, and select out of the herds the bucks and bulls carrying the finest heads, or my collection.

On the 28th, having breakfasted, I rode forth with two after-riders, to try for blesboks, and took up positions on the plain, lying flat on my breast behind ant-hills, while my after-riders, one of whom led my horse, endeavoured to move them towards me. We found the blesboks abundant, but extremely wary. I wounded several, but did not bag one. I however shot two springboks, which were fat, and whose flesh we stood much in need of. I had several chances of wildebeests, but I had resolved not to fire at them.

The following day was the 1st of March. After an early breakfast I again took the field, with my after-riders and a spare horse. There was thunder and lightning on all sides, and I expected the day would set in wet: it all passed over, however, with a few showers, and the weather was delightfully cool. I lay behind ant-hills, while my men, extending to the right and left, endeavoured to drive the game towards me. Late in the day I bagged a fine old blesbok: it was a family shot, running at two hundred yards. I also shot a springbok, and mortally wounded another; both were very long shots.

The blesbok is one of the finest antelopes in the world, and is allowed to be the swiftest buck in Africa. He nevertheless attains very high condition, and at this period was exceedingly fat. I was surprised and delighted with the exquisite manner in which his beautiful colours are blended together. Nothing can exceed the beauty of this animal. Like most other African antelopes, his skin emitted a most delicious and powerful perfume of flowers and sweet-smelling herbs. A secretion issues from between his hoofs, which has likewise a pleasing perfume.

The 3rd was a charmingly cool day. At an early hour in the morning I was visited by a party of Boers, some of whom I had previously met. They were proceeding to hunt wildebeest and blesbok, and were mounted on mares, each of which was followed by a foal. They

requested me to join them in their "jag," but I excused myself, preferring to hunt alone. Having partaken largely of my coffee, the Boers mounted their mares and departed, holding a south-easterly course. As soon as they were out of sight I saddled up, and rode north, with two after-riders, to try for blesboks. I found the country extremely pleasant to ride on. It resembled a well-kept lawn. Troops of graceful springbok and blesbok were to be seen cantering right and left, and large herds of black wildebeests in every direction, now charging and capering, and now reconnoitring. I took up positions on the plain behind the ant-hills. In the forenoon I wounded one blesbok, and late in the day I made a fine double shot, knocking over two old blesboks right and left, at a hundred and a hundred and fifty yards. I also shot one springbok. While "gralloching" a buck, one of the Boers rode up to me to say that his brother had wounded a wildebeest which stood at bay on the plain; and his ammunition being expended, he would feel obliged by my coming to his assistance. I accordingly accompanied the Boer to where his brother stood sentry over the wounded bull, when I lent him my rifle, with which he finished his bull with a bullet in the forehead.

On the following day I hunted to the north-east of my camp, and made a fine shot at a blesbok, knocking him over at a hundred and fifty yards. Returning to camp in a low-lying grassy vley, I started a herd of "vlacke varcke," or

wild hogs. The herd consisted of seven half-grown young ones and three old ones, one of which carried a pair of enormous tusks, projecting eight or nine inches beyond his lip. Being well mounted and the ground favourable, I at once gave chase, and was soon at their heels. My horse was "The Grey." I selected the old boar for my prey, and immediately separated him from his comrades. After two miles of sharp galloping, we commenced ascending a considerable acclivity, when I managed to close with him, and succeeded in turning his head towards my camp. He now reduced his pace to a trot, and regarded me with a most malicious eye, his mouth a mass of foam. He was entirely in my power, as I had only to spring from my horse and bowl him over. I felt certain of him, but resolved not to shoot as long as his course lay in the direction of the waggons. At length, surprised at the resolute manner in which he held for my camp, I headed him; when, to my astonishment, he did not in the slightest swerve from his course, but trotted along behind my horse like a dog following me. This at once roused my suspicions, and I felt certain that the cunning old fellow was making for some retreat, so I resolved to dismount and finish him. Just, however, as I had come to this resolution, I suddenly found myself in a labyrinth of enormous holes, the burrows of the ant-bear. In front of one of these the wild boar pulled up, and, charging stern foremost into it, disappeared from my disappointed

eyes, and I saw him no more. I rode home for my men; and returning, we collected grass and bushes and endeavoured to smoke him out, but without success.

On the 7th we inspanned at dawn of day, and trekked east about ten miles, encamping beside a small isolated farmhouse, which had been lately vacated by some Boer owing to the impending war with the Griquas. Here we found plenty of old cow-dung for fuel—an article which, throughout the whole of the blesbok country, is very scarce, there often being great difficulty in obtaining sufficient fuel to boil the kettle for coffee. Beside the farmhouse were two strong springs of excellent water, in which cresses flourished. Game was abundant on all sides; wildebeests and springboks pasturing within a few hundred yards of the door as we drove up. Below the fountains was a small garden, in which I found a welcome supply of onions and other vegetables.

On the 12th I bagged two bull wildebeests and two springboks to the northward of my camp. In the evening I took my pillow and “komberse,” or skin blanket, to the margin of a neighbouring vley, where I had observed doe blesboks drink. Of these I had not yet secured a single specimen, which I was very anxious to do, as they likewise carry fine horns, which, though not so thick as those of the males, are more gracefully formed. Shortly after I had lain down, two porcupines came grunting up to me, and stood within six feet of where I lay. About

midnight an old wildebeest came and stood within ten yards of me, but I was too lazy to fire at him. All night I heard some creature moving in the cracked earth beneath my pillow ; but, believing it to be a mouse, I did not feel much concerned about the matter. I could not, however, divest myself of a painful feeling that it might be a snake, and wrapped my blanket tight round my body. Awaking at an early hour the following morning, I forgot to look for the tenant who had spent the night beneath my pillow. No blesbok appearing, I stalked an old springbok through the rushes and shot him. Having concealed him, I held for camp, and despatched two men to bring home the venison and my bedding.

While taking my breakfast I observed my men returning, one of them carrying a very large and deadly serpent. I at once felt certain it was he that I had heard the previous night beneath my pillow ; and on asking them where they had killed it, they replied "In your bed." On approaching the bedding, they had discovered the horrid reptile sunning itself on the edge of my blanket, until on perceiving them it glided in beneath it. It was a large specimen of the black variety of the puff adder, one of the most poisonous serpents of Africa, death ensuing within an hour after its bite.

On the 15th I had a very good day's sport. As the day dawned I peeped from my hole, and saw troops of blesboks feeding on every side of me, but none came within range.

I shot one springbok ; and having concealed him in the rushes, I walked to camp. After breakfast, I took the field with Kleinboy and the Bushman, and rode north to try for blesboks. While lying behind an ant-hill on the bare plain, a herd of about thirty wildebeests came thundering down upon me, and the leading bull nearly jumped over me. Into one of these I fired ; he got the ball too far back, however, and made off, but was found by one of my men the following day. Presently Kleinboy rode up, and stated that while he was driving the blesboks he had observed an old stag hartebeest standing in the shade of some tall green bushes in the adjacent range of hills. I resolved to stalk him in the most approved Highland fashion ; so, having made an accurate survey of the ground with my spyglass, I rode within a quarter of a mile of him, and then proceeded to creep in upon him on my hands and knees. In this manner I got within sixty yards of him, where I lay flat on my breast for several minutes until he should give me his broadside. Presently he walked forth from the cover of the bush beneath which he had been standing, when I sent a ball in at his right shoulder, which rested on the skin in his left haunch. Wheeling about, he bounded over an adjacent ridge and was out of sight in a moment. On gaining this ridge I was just in time to see the noble hartebeest stagger for a moment, and then subside into the long grass in a hollow below me. He was a princely old stag, car-

rying splendid horns and a beautiful coat of new hair. I thought I could never sufficiently admire him. Having removed the head and skin, we made for the camp, and on my way thither I was tempted to try a long shot at one of two old blesboks that kept capering to leeward of us. Sitting down on the grass, and resting both my elbows on my knees (a manner of firing much practised by the Boers), I let fly at a blesbok, and made one of the finest shots I had ever seen, sending the ball through the middle of his shoulder at upwards of two hundred and fifty yards. On receiving it he cantered forward a short distance and fell dead. The rifle I used in those days was a double-barrelled two-grooved one, by Dixon of Edinburgh, with which I managed to make such superior shooting to that which I could perform with the old style of rifle, that I considered the latter as a mere "popgun" in comparison with the other. In the evening I took up my position in my shooting-hole to the northward of camp. About an hour after the moon rose, a troop of wildebeests came and stood within thirty yards of me. I fired, and a very large bull with one horn fell to the shot. If I had allowed this bull to lie there, my chance of further sport was over for that night and the following morning. I therefore took the old fellow by his horn, and, exerting my utmost strength and taking time, I managed to drag him as he fell, and still living, to a hollow beside the water, in which I concealed him. In half

an hour another troop of wildebeests came and stood snuffing on the spot where he had fallen. I fired, and a fine old bull received the ball in the shoulder, and bounding forward one hundred yards rolled over in the dust. In about an hour a third troop of wildebeests came and stood within thirty yards of me. At one of these I let fly, and heard the ball crack loudly on his shoulder.

On the 16th I hunted on the plains to the north-east, killing one springbok, and at night I watched the distant vley to the northward of my camp, and got a fright which I shall remember to my dying day. Soon after the moon rose, a troop of wildebeests came within range; at one of these I fired, and he dropped to the shot, the ball passing through the spine. A little after this I discharged my other barrel at a large spotted hyæna, and then I returned my rifle to its holster without loading either barrel, and presently I was asleep.

I had not slept long when my light dreams were influenced by strange sounds. I dreamt that lions were rushing about in quest of me, and, the sounds increasing, I awoke with a sudden start, uttering a loud shriek. I could not for several seconds remember in what part of the world I was, or anything connected with my present position. I heard the rushing of light feet as of a pack of wolves close on every side of me, accompanied by the most unearthly sounds. On raising my head, to

my utter horror I saw on every side nothing but savage wild dogs, chattering and growling. On my right and on my left, and within a few paces of me, stood two lines of these ferocious-looking animals cocking their ears and stretching their necks to have a look at me; while two large troops, in which there were at least forty of them, kept dashing backwards and forwards across my wind within a few yards of me, chattering and growling with the most extraordinary volubility. Another troop of wild dogs were fighting over the wildebeest I had shot, which they had begun to devour. On beholding them I expected no other fate than to be instantly torn to pieces and consumed. I felt my blood curdling along my cheeks and my hair bristling on my head. However, I had presence of mind to consider that the human voice and a determined bearing might overawe them, and accordingly, springing to my feet, I stepped on to the little ledge surrounding the hole, where, drawing myself up to my full height, I waved my large blanket with both hands, at the same time addressing my savage assembly in a loud and solemn manner. This had the desired effect: the wild dogs removed to a more respectful distance, barking at me something like collies. Upon this I snatched up my rifle and commenced loading, and before this was accomplished the entire pack had passed away and did not return.

These had not been gone many minutes when twelve or fifteen large hyænas were hard at work on the wildebeest. I fired two shots at them at different times during the night, but none fell to my shots. Heedless of me they continued their banquet, and long before morning nothing was left of the wildebeest save a few of the larger bones. On the two following mornings I was annoyed by a cunning old bull wildebeest, which, having discovered my retreat, kept sentry over me, and successively drove away every troop of his fellows that approached my vley to drink. He kept feeding just out of rifle-range, and not only warned his comrades of their danger by fixing his eye on my place of concealment and snorting loudly, but when this failed he drove the other wildebeests from me in the most determined manner, like a collie dog driving sheep. Before leaving my hole, however, on the second morning, I had my revenge. A troop of cows, heedless of his warnings, approached the vley. In his anxiety for their safety he neglected his own; and coming for the first time within long rifle-range, I put up my after-sights and let drive at his ribs. The ball took effect, and, kicking up his heels and flourishing his long white tail, the old bull bounded forth, and disappearing over a ridge I saw him no more.

The night of the 19th was to me rather a memorable one, as being the first on which I had the satisfaction of hearing the deep-toned thunder of the lion's roar. Although

there was no one near, to inform me by what beast the haughty and impressive sounds which echoed through the wilderness were produced, I had little difficulty in divining. There was no mistake about it; and on hearing it I at once knew, as well as if accustomed to the sound from my infancy, that the appalling roar which was uttered within half a mile of me was no other than that of the mighty and terrible king of beasts. Although the dignified and truly monarchical-appearance of the lion has long rendered him famous amongst his fellow quadrupeds, and his appearance and habits have often been described by abler pens than mine, nevertheless I consider that a few remarks, resulting from my own personal experience, formed by a tolerably long acquaintance with him both by day and by night, may not prove uninteresting to the reader. There is something so noble and imposing in the presence of the lion, when seen walking with dignified self-possession, free and undaunted, on his native soil, that no description can convey an adequate idea of his striking appearance. The lion is exquisitely formed by nature for the predatory habits which he is destined to pursue. Combining in comparatively small compass the qualities of power and agility, he is enabled, by means of the tremendous machinery with which nature has gifted him, easily to overcome and destroy almost every beast of the forest, however superior to him in weight and stature.

Though considerably under four feet in height, he has little difficulty in dashing to the ground and overcoming the lofty and apparently powerful giraffe, whose head towers above the trees of the forest, and whose skin is nearly an inch in thickness. The lion is the constant attendant of the vast herds of buffaloes which frequent the interminable forests of the interior; and a full-grown one, so long as his teeth are unbroken, generally proves a match for an old bull buffalo, which in size and strength greatly surpasses the most powerful breed of English cattle: the lion also preys on all the larger varieties of the antelopes, and on both varieties of the gnou. The zebra, which is met with in large herds throughout the interior, is also a favourite object of his pursuit.

Lions do not refuse, as has been asserted, to feast upon the venison that they have not killed themselves. I have repeatedly discovered lions of all ages which had taken possession of, and were feasting upon, the carcasses of various game quadrupeds which had fallen before my rifle. The lion is very generally diffused throughout the secluded parts of Southern Africa. He is, however, nowhere met with in great abundance, it being very rare to find more than three, or even two, families of lions frequenting the same district and drinking at the same fountain. When a greater number were met with, I remarked that it was owing to long-protracted droughts, which, by drying nearly all the fountains, had compelled

the game of various districts to crowd the remaining springs, and the lions, according to their custom, followed in the wake. It is a common thing to come upon a full-grown lion and lioness associating with three or four large young ones nearly full grown ; at other times, full-grown males will be found associating and hunting together in a happy state of friendship : two, three, and four full-grown male lions may thus be discovered consorting together.

The male lion is adorned with a long, rank, shaggy mane, which in some instances almost sweeps the ground. The colour of these manes varies, some being very dark, and others of a golden yellow. This appearance has given rise to a prevailing opinion among the Boers that there are two distinct varieties of lions, which they distinguish by the respective names of "Schwart fore life" and "Chiel fore life:" this idea, however, is erroneous. The colour of the lion's mane is generally influenced by his age. He attains his mane in the third year of his existence. I have remarked that at first it is of a yellowish colour ; in the prime of life it is blackest, and when he has numbered many years, but still is in the full enjoyment of his power, it assumes a yellowish-grey, pepper-and-salt sort of colour. These old fellows are cunning and dangerous, and most to be dreaded. The females are utterly destitute of a mane, being covered with a short, thick, glossy coat of tawny

hair. The manes and coats of lions frequenting open-lying districts utterly destitute of trees, such as the borders of the great Kalahari desert, are more rank and handsome than those inhabiting forest districts.

One of the most striking things connected with the lion is his voice, which is extremely grand and peculiarly striking. It consists at times of a low, deep moaning, repeated five or six times, ending in faintly audible sighs; at other times he startles the forest with loud, deep-toned, solemn roars, repeated five or six times in quick succession, each increasing in loudness to the third or fourth, when his voice dies away in five or six low, muffled sounds, very much resembling distant thunder. At times, and not unfrequently, a troop may be heard roaring in concert, one assuming the lead, and two, three, or four more regularly taking up their parts, like persons singing a catch. Like our Scottish stags at the rutting season, they roar loudest in cold, frosty nights; but on no occasions are their voices to be heard in such perfection, or so intensely powerful, as when two or three strange troops of lions approach a fountain to drink at the same time. When this occurs, every member of each troop sounds a bold roar of defiance at the opposite parties; and when one roars, all roar together, and each seems to vie with his comrades in the intensity and power of his voice. The power and grandeur of these nocturnal forest concerts is inconceivably striking and

pleasing to the hunter's ear. The effect, I may remark, is greatly enhanced when the hearer happens to be situated in the depths of the forest, at the dead hour of midnight, unaccompanied by any attendant, and ensconced within twenty yards of the fountain which the surrounding troops of lions are approaching. Such has been my situation many scores of times ; and though I am allowed to have a tolerably good taste for music, I consider the catches with which I was then regaled as the sweetest and most natural I ever heard.

As a general rule, lions roar during the night ; their sighing moans commencing as the shades of evening envelop the forest, and continuing at intervals throughout the night. In distant and secluded regions, however, I have constantly heard them roaring loudly as late as nine and ten o'clock on a bright sunny morning. In hazy and rainy weather they are to be heard at every hour in the day, but their roar is subdued. It often happens that when two strange male lions meet at a fountain a terrific combat ensues, which not unfrequently ends in the death of one of them. The habits of the lion are strictly nocturnal ; during the day he lies concealed beneath the shade of some low bushy tree or wide-spreading bush, either in the level forest or on the mountain side. He is also partial to lofty reeds or fields of long rank yellow grass, such as occur in low-lying vleys. From these haunts he sallies forth when the sun goes down, and

commences his nightly prowling. When he is successful in his beat, and has secured his prey, he does not roar much that night, only uttering occasionally a few low moans : that is, provided no intruders approach him, otherwise the case would be very different.

Lions are ever most active, daring, and presuming in dark and stormy nights ; and consequently on such occasions the traveller ought more particularly to be on his guard. I remarked a fact connected with the lions' hour of drinking peculiar to themselves : they seemed unwilling to visit the fountains with good moonlight. Thus, when the moon rose early, the lions deferred their hour of watering until late in the morning ; and when the moon rose late, they drank at a very early hour in the night. By this acute system many a grisly lion saved his bacon, and is now luxuriating in the forests of South Africa, which had otherwise fallen by the barrels of my " Westley Richards." Owing to the tawny colour of the coat with which nature has robed him he is perfectly invisible in the dark ; and although I have often heard them loudly lapping the water under my very nose, not twenty yards from me, I could not possibly make out so much as the outline of their forms. When a thirsty lion comes to water, he stretches out his massive arms, lies down on his breast to drink, and makes a loud lapping noise in drinking, not to be mistaken. He continues lapping up the water for a long while, and four or five times

during the proceeding he pauses for half a minute as if to take breath. One thing conspicuous about them is their eyes, which, in a dark night, glow like two balls of fire. The female is more fierce and active than the male, as a general rule. Lionesses which have never had young are much more dangerous than those which have. At no time is the lion so much to be dreaded as when his partner has got small young ones. At that season he knows no fear, and, in the coolest and most intrepid manner, he will face a thousand men. A remarkable instance of this kind came under my own observation which confirmed the reports I had before heard from the natives. One day, when out elephant-hunting in the territory of the "Baseleka," accompanied by two hundred and fifty men, I was astonished suddenly to behold a majestic lion slowly and steadily advancing towards us with a dignified step and undaunted bearing, the most noble and imposing that can be conceived. Lashing his tail from side to side, and growling haughtily, his terribly expressive eye resolutely fixed upon us, and displaying a show of ivory well calculated to inspire terror amongst the timid "Bechuanas," he approached. A headlong flight of the two hundred and fifty men was the immediate result; and, in the confusion of the moment, four couples of my dogs, which they had been leading, were allowed to escape in their couples. These instantly faced the lion, who, finding that by his bold bearing he

had succeeded in putting his enemies to flight, now became solicitous for the safety of his little family, with which the lioness was retreating in the back-ground. Facing about, he followed after them with a haughty and independent step, growling fiercely at the dogs which trotted along on either side of him. Three troops of elephants having been discovered a few minutes previous to this, upon which I was marching for the attack, I, with the most heartfelt reluctance, reserved my fire. On running down the hill side, to endeavour to recall my dogs, I observed, for the first time, the retreating lioness with four cubs. About twenty minutes afterwards two noble elephants repaid my forbearance.

Among Indian Nimrods a certain class of royal tigers is dignified with the appellation of "man-eaters." These are tigers, which, having once tasted human flesh, show a predilection for the same, and such characters are very naturally famed and dreaded among the natives. Elderly gentlemen of similar tastes and habits are occasionally met with among the lions in the interior of South Africa, and the danger of such neighbours may be easily imagined. I account for lions first acquiring this taste in the following manner: the Bechuana tribes of the far interior do not bury their dead, but unceremoniously carry them forth, and leave them lying exposed in the forest or on the plain, a prey to the lion and hyæna, or the jackal and vulture; and I can readily imagine that a

lion, having thus once tasted human flesh, would have little hesitation, when opportunity presented itself, of springing upon and carrying off the unwary traveller or "Bechuana" inhabiting his country. Be this as it may, man-eaters occur ; and on my fourth hunting expedition a horrible tragedy was acted one dark night in my little lonely camp by one of these formidable characters, which deprived me, in the far wilderness, of my most valuable servant. In winding up these few observations on the lion, which I trust will not have been tiresome to the reader, I may remark that lion-hunting, under any circumstances, is decidedly a dangerous pursuit. It may, nevertheless, be followed, to a certain extent, with comparative safety by those who have, naturally, a turn for that sort of thing. A recklessness of death, perfect coolness and self-possession, an acquaintance with the disposition and manners of lions, and a tolerable knowledge of the use of the rifle, are indispensable to him who would shine in the overpoweringly exciting pastime of hunting this justly-celebrated king of beasts.



CHAPTER X.

Boer Encampment — A Night in a Storm — A Fancy Costume — Fearful Encounter with a Lioness — “Colesberg” dreadfully mangled — Cowardice of Hottentots — We march back to Colesberg — Danger of being plundered by the Rebel Boers — Arrival at Colesberg — The Troops march against the Boers — The Battle of Schwart Coppice — Start for the distant Land of Elephants — The Hottentots make free with my Brandy, and mutiny — Leopards — Kuruman — Mr. Moffat, the good Missionary — Roasted Locusts.

On the 22nd of March I rode south to a distant farm, for the double purpose of obtaining some corn or meal, and of hearing the news of the impending war between the Boers and Griquas. On reaching the farm I found that a large party of Boers were here encamped together: they had mustered for mutual protection. Their tents and waggons were drawn up on every side of the farm-house, forming a very lively appearance. The Boers informed me that all their countrymen, and also the Griquas, were thus packed together in “lagers,” or encampments, and that hostilities were about to commence. They remonstrated with me on what they were pleased to term my madness, in living alone in an isolated posi-

tion in such sharp times, and invited me to place myself for protection under their banner. I endeavoured to persuade them to get up a party to hunt the lion; but this they declined to do, remarking that "a lion (like Johnnie Gordon's bagpipes) was not to be played with." Returning to my camp I bowled over a springbok at one hundred and fifty yards. On the 23rd, having breakfasted, I rode north, with after-riders, to try for blesboks. It was a cool day, with a strong easterly breeze, and we found the game extremely wild. As we proceeded, vast herds kept streaming on up the wind, darkening the plain before us, in countless thousands. About two miles north of the bushy mountain where I had heard the lion roar, far in the vast level plain, were some bushy mimosa-trees. Within a few hundred yards of these we discovered an old bull wildebeest, newly killed by a lion and half eaten. His large and striking foot-prints were deeply embedded in the sand, and so fresh that they seemed to have been imprinted only a few minutes before. Moreover, there was not a single vulture near the carcass. We therefore felt convinced that the lion must be lying somewhere near us, having hidden himself on our approach. We searched for some time in the adjacent hollows, where the grass was very rank, but in vain. The game now became more and more wild, taking away into another district in long strings, like our island red-deer when hard driven; I accordingly gave it up, and turned my horse's head for

camp. On my way thither I bagged one blesbok and two bull wildebeests: one of these got the bullet through his heart, but nevertheless stood at bay for some time after. On reaching camp I suddenly resolved to take men and horses with me, and spend the night in the vicinity of the lion, and search early for him on the following morning. Accordingly, while dinner was preparing, I occupied myself in cleaning and loading my three double-barrelled rifles; after which, having dined, I rode with Kleinboy and John Stofolus to my hole by the vley, where my bedding lay day and night. This spot was within a few miles of where we expected to fall in with the lion in the morning. We secured the three horses to one another, as there was no tree or bush within miles of us; but these I could dispense with, for I knew very well by the looks of the Hottentots that they would not sleep much, but would keep a vigilant eye over our destinies. I spent a most miserable night. The wind, which had been blowing so fresh in the height of the day, had subsided to a calm when the sun went down, and was now succeeded by an almost death-like stillness, which I too well knew was the harbinger of a coming tempest. We had not lain down an hour when the sky to leeward became black as pitch. Presently the most vivid flashes of lightning followed one another in quick succession, accompanied by terrific peals of thunder. The wind, which, during the day, had been out of the north-east,

now, as is usual on such occasions, veered right round and came whistling up from the south-west, where the tempest was brewing ; and in a few minutes more it was upon us in all its fury, the rain descending in torrents on our devoted heads, while vivid flashes of lightning momentarily illumined, with the brilliancy of day, the darkness that reigned around. In a very few minutes the whole plain was a sheet of water, and every atom of my clothes and bedding was thoroughly saturated. My three rifles had excellent holsters, and with the help of two sheep-skins which I used instead of saddle-cloths I kept them quite dry. In two hours the tempest had passed away, but light rain fell till morning, until which time I lay on the wet ground, soaked to the skin. About midnight we heard the lion roar a mile or so to the northward ; and a little before the day dawned I again heard him in the direction of the carcase which we had found on the preceding day. Soon after this I gave the word to march. We then arose and saddled our horses. I found my trousers lying in a pool of water, so I converted a blanket into a long kilt by strapping it round my waist with my shooting-belt. The costume of my followers was equally unique. We held for the north end of the lion's mountain at a sharp pace, which we gained before it was clear enough to see surrounding objects. As the light broke in upon us we reduced our pace, and rode slowly up the middle of the vast level plain towards the carcase of the wildebeest, with

large herds of wildebeests, springbok, blesbok, and quaggas on every side of us, which were this day as tame as they had been wild on the previous one. This is generally the case after a storm. The morn was cloudy; misty vapours hung on the shoulders of the neighbouring mountains, and the air was loaded with balmy perfume, emitted by the grateful plants and herbs. As we approached the carcase, I observed several jackals steal away, and some half-drowned-looking vultures were sitting round it. But there was no appearance of the lion. I spent the next half-hour in riding across the plain looking for his spoor; but I sought in vain. Being cold and hungry, I turned my horse's head for camp, and rode slowly along through the middle of the game, which would scarcely move out of rifle-range on either side of me.

Suddenly I observed a number of vultures seated on the plain about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, and close beside them stood a huge lioness, consuming a blesbok which she had killed. She was assisted in her repast by about a dozen jackals, which were feasting along with her in the most friendly and confidential manner. Directing my followers' attention to the spot, I remarked, "I see the lion;" to which they replied, "Whar? whar? Yah! Almagtig! dat is he;" and instantly reining in their steeds and wheeling about, they pressed their heels to their horses' sides, and were preparing to betake themselves to flight. I asked them what they were going to do? To

which they answered, "We have not yet placed caps on our rifles." This was true; but while this short conversation was passing the lioness had observed us. Raising her full, round face, she overhauled us for a few seconds and then set off at a smart canter towards a range of mountains some miles to the northward; the whole troop of jackals also started off in another direction; there was, therefore, no time to think of caps. The first move was to bring her to bay, and not a second was to be lost. Spurring my good and lively steed, and shouting to my men to follow, I flew across the plain, and, being fortunately mounted on Colesberg, the flower of my stud, I gained upon her at every stride. This was to me a joyful moment, and I at once made up my mind that she or I must die.

The lioness having had a long start of me, we went over a considerable extent of ground before I came up with her. She was a large full-grown beast, and the bare and level nature of the plain added to her imposing appearance. Finding that I gained upon her, she reduced her pace from a canter to a trot, carrying her tail stuck out behind her, and slewed a little to one side. I shouted loudly to her to halt, as I wished to speak with her, upon which she suddenly pulled up, and sat on her haunches like a dog, with her back towards me, not even deigning to look round. She then appeared to say to herself, "Does this fellow know who he is after?"

Having thus sat for half a minute, as if involved in thought, she sprang to her feet, and, facing about, stood looking at me for a few seconds, moving her tail slowly from side to side, showing her teeth, and growling fiercely. She next made a short run forwards, making a loud, rumbling noise like thunder. This she did to intimidate me ; but, finding that I did not flinch an inch nor seem to heed her hostile demonstrations, she quietly stretched out her massive arms, and lay down on the grass. My Hottentots now coming up, we all three dismounted, and, drawing our rifles from their holsters, we looked to see if the powder was up in the nipples, and put on our caps. While this was doing the lioness sat up, and showed evident symptoms of uneasiness. She looked first at us, and then behind her, as if to see if the coast were clear ; after which she made a short run towards us, uttering her deep-drawn murderous growls. Having secured the three horses to one another by their rheims, we led them on as if we intended to pass her, in the hope of obtaining a broadside. But this she carefully avoided to expose, presenting only her full front. I had given Stofolus my Moore rifle, with orders to shoot her if she should spring upon me, but on no account to fire before me. Kleinboy was to stand ready to hand me my Purdey rifle, in case the two-grooved Dixon should not prove sufficient. My men as yet had been steady, but they were in a precious stew, their faces having assumed a ghastly pale-

ness ; and I had a painful feeling that I could place no reliance on them.

Now, then, for it, neck or nothing ! She is within sixty yards of us, and she keeps advancing. We turned the horses' tails to her. I knelt on one side, and, taking a steady aim at her breast, let fly. The ball cracked loudly on her tawny hide, and crippled her in the shoulder, upon which she charged with an appalling roar, and in the twinkling of an eye she was in the midst of us. At this moment Stofolus's rifle exploded in his hand, and Kleinboy, whom I had ordered to stand ready by me, danced about like a duck in a gale of wind. The lioness sprang upon Colesberg, and fearfully lacerated his ribs and haunches with her horrid teeth and claws ; the worst wound was on his haunch, which exhibited a sickening, yawning gash, more than twelve inches long, almost laying bare the very bone. I was very cool and steady, and did not feel in the least degree nervous, having fortunately great confidence in my own shooting ; but I must confess, when the whole affair was over I felt that it was a very awful situation and attended with extreme peril, as I had no friend with me on whom I could rely.

When the lioness sprang on Colesberg, I stood out from the horses, ready with my second barrel for the first chance she should give me of a clear shot. This she quickly did ; for, seemingly satisfied with the revenge she had now taken, she quitted Colesberg, and, slewing her

tail to one side, trotted sulkily past within a few paces of me. Taking one step to the left, I pitched my rifle to my shoulder, and in another second the lioness was stretched on the plain a lifeless corpse. In the struggles of death she half turned on her back, and stretched her neck and fore arms convulsively, when she fell back to her former position; her mighty arms hung powerless by her side, her lower jaw fell, blood streamed from her mouth, and she expired. At the moment I fired my second shot, Stofolus, who hardly knew whether he was alive or dead, allowed the three horses to escape. These galloped frantically across the plain; on which he and Kleinboy instantly started after them, leaving me standing alone and unarmed within a few paces of the lioness, which they, from their anxiety to be out of the way, evidently considered quite capable of doing further mischief.

Such is ever the case with these worthies, and with nearly all the natives of South Africa. No reliance can be placed on them. They will to a certainty forsake their master in the most dastardly manner in the hour of peril, and leave him in the lurch. A stranger, however, hearing these fellows recounting their own gallant adventures, when sitting in the evening along with their comrades round a blazing fire, or under the influence of their adored "Cape smoke" or native brandy, might fancy them to be the bravest of the brave. Having skinned the lioness and cut off her head, we placed her trophies

upon Beauty, and held for camp. Before we had proceeded a hundred yards from the carcase, upwards of sixty vultures, whom the lioness had often fed, were feasting on her remains.

We led poor Colesberg slowly home, where having washed his wounds, and carefully stitched them together, I ordered the cold water cure to be adopted. Under this treatment his wounds rapidly healed, and he eventually recovered. The sky remained overcast throughout the day. When the shades of evening set in, terror seemed to have taken possession of the minds of my followers, and they swore that the mate of the lioness, on finding her bones, would follow on our spoor and revenge her death. Under this impression they refused to remain about the waggons or in the tent after the sun went down ; and having cut down the rafters and cupboards of the Boer's house for fuel, they kindled a large fire in the kitchen, where they took up their quarters for the night.

I continued hunting here until the 29th, when I deemed it high time to return to Colesberg, for the purpose of packing and storing my curiosities, increasing my establishment, and refitting generally, preparatory to starting for the distant land of elephants in the far forests of the interior. The distemper or horse sickness, which rages in those parts during the summer months, might be expected shortly to be past, there was therefore not much time to lose. The morning was spent in stowing

the waggons, greasing the wheels, securing the pots, gridirons, spades, &c., and overhauling the yokes, rheims, straps, and other gear, preparatory to inspanning, and in the afternoon we inspanned, and, turning our faces to the south, marched upon Colesberg.

On the march I killed two springboks; and having proceeded ten miles we halted for the night. It rained heavily till morning. My oxen were in fine condition, and, having done very little work of late, they were very fresh and obstreperous. On the following day we crossed the Riet river. The country was very heavy, owing to the recent rains, and some of my gear, which was rotten, broke repeatedly, causing much delay. At sundown we halted at a lager, or encampment of Boers. Here about a dozen families were congregated together for mutual protection. These men were all rebels and our enemies, being, at that very moment, at war with our allies, the Griquas and Bastards, whom we shortly afterwards assisted against the Boers. I deemed it rather a rash step thus coolly to march through the enemy's country, bearding as it were the lion in his den. There was, however, no help for it; so I resolved to take the bull by the horns, and put on a bold face. The least that I might have expected was to have my waggons most thoroughly ransacked and plundered, if not taken from me altogether. This they would certainly have done if they had thought that I was an Englishman; but

by saying I was a berg Scot, or mountain Scotsman, backed by the garb of Old Gaul, which I always wore, I convinced them that I was a Scotsman. Many of the clergymen among the Boers being Scots, they entertain a predilection for my countrymen.

These Boers happened to be short of coffee, a beverage of which they are extremely fond. I had fortunately a large supply in my waggons; and as I was on my way to Colesberg, I had no objection to dispose of it. Accordingly, by presenting the ladies of the leading families with a few half-pounds of coffee, and selling them the remainder of my stock at a moderate price, I managed to secure the good graces of the whole, and they were pleased to express their opinion that I was a "ghooe carle," or good fellow. On hearing that a few days previous I had bagged a savage lioness, and on beholding her trophies, they seemed quite astonished, remarking to one another, "Mi scapsels! vat zoorten mens is de?" signifying, "My stars and garters! what sort of man is this?" In the course of the evening and during the night several armed parties of Boers halted at this lager to refresh, and then passed on to join the head-quarters of their army, which was encamped about forty miles to the southward, at a place called "Schwart Coppice." Each of these Boers was provided with one or more packhorses bearing his commissariat and ammunition, and many of them had Hottentot and Bushman after-riders. Their

sole weapon consisted of their roer or long gun; each wore a leathern shooting-belt round his waist, and a large bullock's horn containing powder dangled by his side.

On the 31st I continued my march, and on the evening of the 2nd of April I reached Philipolis, a missionary station, and the chief town of the Bastards' country. My road had led between the encampments of the contending parties. Troops of mounted Boers had been scouring the country in every direction, plundering all they could lay their hands on, and sweeping off the cattle and horses of the Bastards. Halting at an encampment of Bastards on the preceding day, I was much amused by their taking me for a missionary. My costume was not very clerical, consisting of a dirty shirt and an old Gordon tartan kilt. From a Bastard in the vicinity of Philipolis I obtained two large rough dogs, in exchange for three pounds of coffee and a little tea. The names of these dogs were "Bles" and "Flam." Bles was of an extremely fierce and savage disposition. On the evening of the 3rd we encamped on the northern bank of the mighty Orange River, at a place called "Boata's Drift," which is nearly opposite Colesberg. Our march had been through a succession of mountains, covered with excellent pasture to their summits. It had rained heavily throughout the day. After inspecting the drift or ford on the following morning, we calculated that the river was too high for

the waggons to cross ; and by sending a man over on horseback, according to the most approved custom, we ascertained that a passage for the waggons was impracticable. I accordingly instructed my men to proceed to Norval's Punt, situated a long march higher up the river, there to cross and join me in Colesberg on the evening of the following day ; and having breakfasted, I saddled "The Immense Brute," and, taking the ford high up, I managed to cross the river in safety, the current having twice taken my horse off his legs. In two hours I entered the village of Colesberg, where I found the officers of the 91st and all my other friends in great force.

My waggons did not make their appearance in Colesberg until the afternoon of the third day. I took up my quarters with my old friend Mr. Paterson, who also kindly accommodated the half of my stud in his stables, and the other half I picketed in the stables of my old regiment the Cape Mounted Rifles. My oxen I permitted to run day and night in the neighbouring mountains. On the 7th we off-loaded the waggons, and made a grand parade of my heads and hunting trophies in front of Paterson's house, which was situated in the centre of the village : this attracted crowds of persons throughout the day. In the afternoon of the 8th, Mr. Rawstorne, the resident magistrate, received despatches from Adam Kok, chief of the Bastards, stating that the Boers had commenced active hostilities, and craving assistance from

government. Accordingly, in the evening an order was issued that all the available force in the garrison should march upon the Orange River next day. This I considered an intense bore, as I should thereby lose the society of all my friends. On the following morning all was bustle and preparation throughout the village, the military preparing for the march, and the merchants loading up their waggons with commissariat for the supply of the troops, while many a dark-eyed nymph wiped the hot tear from her expressive eye, and heaved a deep-drawn sigh as she reflected on the absence of her lover and the casualties of war.

At half-past twelve the men mustered on the parade-ground, and marched out of the village for Alleman's Drift. Paterson politely requested me to occupy his quarters as long as I remained in Colesberg, and not to spare his cellar, which contained most excellent wine. On the following day, while actively employed in forwarding my affairs, a friend informed me that all my oxen were safely lodged in the skit-kraal, or pound, from which I released them, after a deal of trouble and annoyance, by a small pecuniary disbursement. In the evening the village was agitated by a report that a skirmish had taken place between the Boers and Bastards, in which several had fallen on both sides, and that it was the intention of the Boers to pillage Colesberg. On the 15th, in company with Messrs. Gibbon and

Draper, two merchants of Colesberg, I rode out to visit my friends of the 91st, who were encamped at Alleman's Drift, on the south side of the river. At this spot the Orange River and the surrounding scenery are very beautiful, reminding me of Highland scenery. At one bold sweep of the river the waters are hemmed in by stupendous granite-rocks, which cause a deep and sweeping rapid. Below are long deep pools, enclosed by banks adorned with drooping willows and everlasting verdure. I found my friends the military employed, according to the most approved system in the army, luxuriating in brandy and cheroots. The privates, availing themselves of the proximity of the river, were enjoying the recreations of angling and dragging the river with nets. They captured lots of mullet and barbel, averaging from one to four pounds in weight.

A party of artillery and a detachment of the 7th Dragoon Guards were reported *en route* from Fort Beaufort, to assist the 91st in their operations against the Boers. Skirmishes were daily occurring between the belligerents on the opposite side, and expresses from Adam Kok were continually arriving in camp, soliciting assistance. The manner in which these skirmishes were conducted was very amusing, and illustrative of the high courage of the contending parties. Every day, having breakfasted, the Boers and Bastards were in the habit of meeting and peppering away at one another till the after-

noon, when each party returned to its respective encampment. The distance at which they stood from one another might be somewhere above a couple of miles, and they fired at one another peeping over ranges of coppice or low rocky hills, while large herds of springboks and wildebeests kept quietly pasturing on the goreless field of battle between them.

Some of these neutrals, I was informed, occasionally fell before the hissing balls of the redoubted warriors. Before dismissing the subject of the rebellion of '45, I may state that soon after this, the 91st and Cape Corps men being reinforced with a party of artillery and a detachment of the 7th Dragoon Guards, they crossed the Orange River, and advanced upon the Boers' position by forced marches, when the Boers were charged by the dragoons, and put to flight, and their waggons and commissariat fell into our hands. On this occasion the Boers had two pieces of ordnance, of which they were supposed to have obtained possession some years previously at Port Natal. Over one of these presided a Frenchman of low stature; and while little Monsieur was actively employed in ramming down one of their home-made balls, which were constructed of lead, a Cape Corps man rode up, and sent a bullet through the centre of his skull. Thus ended the memorable battle of Schwart Coppice; and since that time the valourous Bastards have been loud in their own praises, declaring

that "they are the boys to put the Boers up to the time o' day."

On the forenoon of the 16th I rode through the river to visit a gentleman of the name of Bain, who was then living on one of Mr. Fossey's farms. Mr. Bain had made several trips into the interior, and gave me much valuable information and dazzling accounts of the sport I might expect. He recommended my trekking down the Orange River to a drift near Rhama, and thence proceeding by Campbellsdorp to Kuruman, a missionary station distant from Colesberg about two hundred and fifty miles, where I should obtain a Bechuana interpreter, and all necessary information from the resident missionary. On the following day, having taken leave of my kind friends and brother sportsmen, I rode into Colesberg. Here I had the pleasure of meeting two Nimrods, Messrs. Murray and Oswell, proceeding, like myself, on a hunting expedition into the far interior—the former a keen salmon-fisher from the banks of Tay; the latter a civilian in the Honourable East India Company's service. During my stay in Colesberg I was actively employed storing my collection and refitting. All my specimens were carefully sewn up in canvas, and nailed down in cases; and perishable articles, such as skins and stuffed heads, were hermetically sealed, being carefully soldered up in tin cases by old Mr. Privet, the tinsmith, one of the leading members of the community of Colesberg.

I covered my waggons with new sails, and had the wheels and iron-work carefully overhauled by the blacksmith. I purchased from various parties several excellent horses and trek-oxen, and increased my kennel of dogs to twelve stout, rough, serviceable-looking curs. From Mr. Williams of the commissariat I purchased a large elephant-gun, carrying four to the pound. I engaged two additional Hottentots, named Johannus and Kleinfeldt, and replenished my supplies in every department; and on the 22nd, everything being ready, I resolved, if possible, to get under way that afternoon. With inconceivable trouble I managed to collect all my runaway men, dogs, oxen, and horses together; and, after much bustle and angry altercation with my inebriated and swarthy crew, my caravan was in motion, and started on its distant journey. We were followed by the female acquaintances of our Hottentots, screaming, yelling, and cursing at their men, at the same time catching up handfuls of red dust, which they tossed into the air with true Hottentot action. Having no hair fortunately to rend, they contented themselves with scratching their woolly pates and rending their petticoats, which they soon reduced to tatters. Among other articles with which I loaded up while in Colesberg was a number of common muskets, which had been represented to me as being the most available to barter for ivory with the tribes of the far interior. These I afterwards turned to

good account, and regretted that I did not possess ten times as many of them. As it was not improbable that, in the event of my encamping too near to Colesberg that evening, my followers would avail themselves of the opportunity to levant under cover of night, and return to the embraces of their wives and sweethearts, I made up my mind, having once succeeded in setting them in motion, to give them a good spell of it; and accordingly, there being good moonlight, I did not permit them to outspan until after midnight. I held a westerly course, steering for the Saltpan's Drift, about four days' journey down the Orange River, where I intended crossing. By adopting this course I avoided the hostile Boers, who were scouring the country across the river immediately opposite to Colesberg.

On the fourth day I reached Saltpan's Drift, which I crossed with considerable difficulty, the waggons repeatedly sticking fast in the deep sand. The opposite bank was extremely steep, and required an hour's cutting with our pickaxes and shovels. We passed the farms of several Boers, from whom I purchased three excellent dogs, named "Wolf," "Prince," and "Bonteberg." On one of these farms were half-a-dozen ostriches, which the Boer endeavoured to persuade me to purchase. Continuing our march, on the 28th we passed through the Griqua kraal named Rhama. In the morning, on proceeding to rouse my men, I discovered Kleinboy very

coolly smoking his pipe over my loose, dilapidated powder-casks; upon which I seized the culprit, and handled him rather roughly. This so disgusted my friend that he dashed his pipe on the ground with true Hottentot action, and swore he would go no farther with me. The appearance, however, of a fine fat sheep, which I purchased a few minutes after from a Griqua, induced Mr. Kleinboy to alter his mind on the subject, and he sulkily returned to his duty. On the 4th of May we made the fair Vaal River, which we crossed at my old drift. Here a party of Korannas rode up to the waggons, mounted on pack-oxen. The bridles consisted of thongs attached to sticks passed through a hole in the animals' noses, and the saddle was a sheepskin secured with a thong across the back. In the evening we trekked half way to Campbellsdorp. On the march my dogs killed two fine porcupines, by tearing off their heads, the only vulnerable part, but getting at the same time their own noses and shoulders full of the quills. On the following day we passed through Campbellsdorp, where I was kindly welcomed by Mr. Bartlett, the resident missionary, from whom I received a liberal present of bread and vegetables.

On the third day after leaving Campbellsdorp we reached Daniel's Kuil, a kraal of Grikwas under Waterboer. The country through which we passed was level and uninteresting, no hill nor landmark relieving the

ocean-like expanse and sameness of the scene in any direction. In parts the country was covered as far as I could see with a species of bush, averaging about nine feet in height, having a grey leaf and bunches of small grey blossoms, yielding a very sweet and powerful aromatic perfume. In the evening we continued our march to Kramer's Fonteyn, a very powerful fountain, whose waters issue hot from the earth, as if they were mixed with boiling water. Leaving Kramer's Fonteyn on the 9th, we held for Koning, a very distant water on the road to Kuruman. Towards midnight my men commenced driving furiously, and I ascertained that they were under the influence of liquor, which I imagined they had obtained from the Griquas. On ordering them to halt and outspan, Mr. Kleinboy only drove the harder, so that I found it necessary to send him flying off the box. A short time after I had been asleep I was wakened by a commotion amongst my cattle, and found that my men had commenced inspanning the oxen, stating that they intended to proceed no farther, but to return with the waggons to the colony. Finding remonstrance vain, I had recourse to my double-barrelled rifle, upon which my followers for the moment relinquished their intention of inspanning, and, retiring to the shelter of a neighbouring bush, they shortly fell asleep. I kept sentry over the waggons during the remainder of the night, with my rifle in my hand and a hatchet by my side. At dawn

of day on the following morning I roused my ruffians, and ordered them to inspan, which orders they mechanically obeyed, swearing, however, that this was the last time they would inspan my oxen.

Having proceeded about ten miles, we arrived at Koning: this was a vley of fine spring-water, about six hundred yards in length, densely covered with lofty reeds from twelve to fifteen feet high. This place is said never to be without lions. Here was spoor of zebras and hartebeests. In the afternoon I observed that my men were again in liquor. I had at first imagined that the Griquas had supplied them with brandy; but upon examining my liquor-case I discovered that one had been broken into, and two bottles of brandy stolen. This was a second night of anxiety and trouble. I kept watch over my goods and cattle, with my rifle in my hand, till morning. The night was piercingly cold, and in the morning the ground was white with hoar-frost, and a thick coating of ice covered the pools of water. At mid-day on the 11th we left Koning, and continued our march to Kuruman, halting at sundown without water. On our left our view was bounded by the Kamhanni Mountains, an extensive rocky chain. In every other direction a vast endless plain extended as far as the eye could strain. The plains were covered with rank yellow grass, interspersed with clumps of grey-leaved bushes. Shortly before outspanning we started three

leopards that were consuming a duiker. Throughout all this country game was very scarce. Since crossing the Vaal, with the exception of feathered game, I had shot only one springbok and one steinbok.

On the following day we reached Kuruman, or New Litakoo, a lovely green spot in the wilderness, strongly contrasting with the sterile and inhospitable regions by which it is surrounded. I was here kindly welcomed and hospitably entertained by Mr. Moffat and Mr. Hamilton, both missionaries of the London Society, and also by Mr. Hume, an old trader, long resident at Kuruman. The gardens at Kuruman are extensive and extremely fertile. Besides corn and vegetables they contained a great variety of fruits, amongst which were vines, peach-trees, nectarines, apple, orange, and lemon trees, all of which in their seasons bear a profusion of the most delicious fruit. These gardens are irrigated with the most liberal supply of water from a powerful fountain which gushes forth, at once forming a little river, from a subterraneous cave, which has several low narrow mouths, but within is lofty and extensive. This cave is stated by the natives to extend to a very great distance under ground. The natives about Kuruman and the surrounding districts generally embrace the Christian religion. Mr. Moffat kindly showed me through his printing establishment, church, and school-rooms, which were lofty and well built, and altogether on a scale which would not have disgraced

one of the towns of the more enlightened colony. It was Mr. Moffat who reduced the Bechuana language to writing and printing; since which he has printed thousands of Sichuana Testaments, as also tracts and hymns, which were now eagerly purchased by the converted natives. Mr. Moffat is a person admirably calculated to excel in his important calling. Together with a noble and athletic frame he possesses a face on which forbearance and Christian charity are very plainly written, and his mental and bodily attainments are great. Minister, gardener, blacksmith, gunsmith, mason, carpenter, glazier—every hour of the day finds this worthy pastor engaged in some useful employment—setting, by his own exemplary piety and industrious habits, a good example to others to go and do likewise.

Mr. Moffat informed me that a missionary named Dr. Livingstone, who was married to his eldest daughter, had lately established a missionary station among the Bakatlas at Mabotsa, in the vale of Bakatla, about fourteen days' journey to the north-east. Thither he recommended me at once to proceed, as few of the larger varieties of game could now be expected to be found to the southward of Bakatla. He represented to me that my falling in with elephants, even throughout the vast forests in the country immediately beyond Bakatla, was very uncertain, and recommended me, if I was determined to have good elephant-shooting, to endeavour to push on to the

remote and endless forests beyond the mountains of Bamangwato, in the territory of Sicomy, the great and paramount chief of the extensive country of the Baman-gwato. There would also be a probability of obtaining ivory in barter from Sicomy, he being reported to possess large quantities of that valuable commodity. By Mr. Moffat's assistance I engaged a Bechuana in the capacity of interpreter in the Dutch and Sichuana languages. From Mr. Hume I purchased a supply of wheat; and on the following day I set all my people to work on a mill of Mr. Moffat's to reduce this wheat to flour.

On the 15th I took leave of my friends at Kuruman, and continued my journey in a north-easterly course through a heavy sandy country of boundless level plains, stretching away on every side, covered with rank yellow grass, which, waving in the breeze, imparted the idea of endless fields of ripe corn. At sundown we crossed the Matluarin river, an insignificant stream, and encamped on its northern bank. On the march we saw a few blue wildebeests and ostriches. At dawn of day on the following morning we pursued our journey through the same description of country, varied however with detached clumps of thorny mimosas. On the march we crossed a swarm of locusts, resting for the night on the grass and bushes. They lay so thick that the waggon could have been filled with them in a very short time, covering the large bushes just as a swarm of young bees

covers the branch on which it pitches. Locusts afford fattening and wholesome food to man, birds, and all sorts of beasts ; cows and horses, lions, jackals, hyænas, antelopes, elephants, &c., devour them. We met a party of Batlapis carrying heavy burdens of them on their backs. Our hungry dogs made a fine feast on them. The cold frosty night had rendered them unable to take wing until the sun should restore their powers. As it was difficult to obtain sufficient food for my dogs, I and Isaac took a large blanket, which we spread under a bush, whose branches were bent to the ground with the mass of locusts which covered it ; and having shaken the branches, in an instant I had more locusts than I could carry on my back : these we roasted for ourselves and dogs.

Soon after the sun was up, on looking behind me, I beheld the locusts stretching to the west in vast clouds, resembling smoke ; but the wind, soon after veering round, brought them back to us, and they flew over our heads, for some time actually darkening the sun. In the evening I continued my march by moonlight, and halted within a few miles of Motito, an extensive kraal of the Batlapis, a tribe of Bechuanas. The nights were piercing cold, the grass being every morning covered with white frost.

CHAPTER XI.

Motito — The Bechuana Tribes — The mysterious great inland Lake — Blesbok and Wildebeest abundant — Park-like Country — We arrive at the beautiful Vale of Bakatla — Dr. Livingstone the Missionary — Native Fashions at Church — Determine to push on to Bamangwato — The Natives follow me for Venison — Great Variety of Game — A dangerous Fight with a herd of Buffaloes, two of which are slain — A Colony of Baboons — A Rhinoceros chases me round a Bush — Habits of the Beast — A noble Eland killed — An impromptu Steak — Slay a Rhinoceros, and lose my way in the Forest.

AT an early hour on the 17th I outspanned at Motito, where I was kindly received by Monsieur Loga and Mr. Edwards, the former a French missionary stationed at Motito, and the latter an English missionary from Mabotza. Another French missionary, named Monsieur Lemue, belonging to the station, was absent. The women at Motito wear heavier ornaments of beads than any with whom I am acquainted. As I have now reached the southern borders of that vast tract of Southern Africa inhabited by the numerous tribes of the Bechuanas, it will be necessary, before proceeding further, to give a sketch of their manners and customs. They are a lively and intelligent race of people, and remarkable for their

good humour: they are well formed, if not starved in infancy. They possess pleasing features and very fine eyes and teeth; their hair is short and woolly; the colour of their complexion is of a light copper. The various tribes live in kraals, or villages, of various sizes, along with their respective chiefs. Their wigwams are built in a circular form, and thatched with long grass; the floor and wall, inside and out, are plastered with a compound of clay and cow-dung. The entrances are about three feet high and two feet broad. Each wigwam is surrounded with a hedge of wickerwork, while one grand hedge of wait-a-bit thorns surrounds the entire kraal, protecting the inmates from lions and other animals.

The dress of the men consists of a kaross, or skin cloak, which hangs gracefully from their shoulders; and another garment, termed tsecha, which encircles their loins, and is likewise made of skin. On their feet they wear a simple sandal formed of the skin of the buffalo or camelopard. On their legs and arms they carry ornaments of brass and copper of different patterns, which are manufactured by themselves. The men also wear a few ornaments of beads round their necks and on their arms. Around their necks, besides beads, they carry a variety of other appendages, the majority of which are believed to possess a powerful charm to preserve them from evil. One of these is a small hollow bone, through which they blow when in peril;

another is a set of dice formed of ivory, which they rattle in their hands and cast on the ground to ascertain if they are to be lucky in any enterprise in which they may be about to engage; also a host of bits of root and bark which are medicinal. From their necks also depend gourd snuff-boxes made of an extremely diminutive species of pumpkin, trained to grow in a bottle-like shape. They never move without their arms, which consist of a shield, a bundle of assagais, a battle-axe, and a knobkerry. The shields are formed of the hide of the buffalo or camelopard; their shape among some tribes is oval, among others round. The assagai is a sort of light spear or javelin, having a wooden shaft about six feet in length attached to it. Some of these are formed solely for throwing, and a skilful warrior will send one through a man's body at one hundred yards. Another variety of assagai is formed solely for stabbing. The blades of these are stouter, and the shafts shorter and thicker, than the other variety. They are found mostly among the tribes very far in the interior. Their battle-axes are elegantly formed, consisting of a triangular-shaped blade, fastened in a handle formed of the horn of the rhinoceros. The men employ their time in war and hunting, and in dressing the skins of wild animals. The dress of the women consists of a kaross depending from the shoulders, and a short kilt formed of the skin of the pallah, or some other antelope. Around their necks, arms, waists, and

ankles they wear large and cumbrous coils of beads of a variety of colours, tastefully arranged in different patterns. The women chiefly employ their time in cultivating their fields and gardens, in which they rear corn, pumpkins, and water-melons; and likewise in harvesting their crops and grinding their corn. Both men and women go bareheaded: they anoint their heads with "sibelo," a shining composition, being a mixture of fat and a grey sparkling ore, having the appearance of mica. Some of the tribes besmear their bodies with a mixture of fat and red clay, imparting to them the appearance of Red Indians. Most of the tribes possess cattle; these are attended to and milked solely by the men, a woman being never allowed to set foot within the cattle-kraal. Polygamy is allowed, and any man may keep as many wives as he pleases: the wife, however, has in the first instance to be purchased. Among tribes possessed of cattle the price of a wife is ten head of cattle; but among the poorer tribes a wife may be obtained for a few spades with which they cultivate their fields. These spades, which are manufactured by themselves, are fastened in the end of a long shaft, and are used as our labourers use the hoe. Rows of women may be seen digging together in the fields singing songs, to which they keep time with their spades.

The name of the chief at Motito was Motchuara, a subordinate of the great chief Mahura. He was very

anxious that I should remain a day with him, for the purpose of trading in ostrich-feathers and karosses ; but being anxious to push forward, I resumed my march in the afternoon, and trekked on till near midnight, when I encamped in an extensive forest of grey and ancient-looking camel-dorn trees. These were the finest I had yet seen in Africa, each tree assuming a wide-spreading and picturesque appearance. They were detached and in groups, like oaks in an English deer-park. Many of them were inhabited by whole colonies of the social grosbeak, a bird with whose wonderful habitations the branches were loaded. These remarkable birds, which are about the size and appearance of the British greenfinch, construct their nests and live socially together under one common roof, the whole fabric being formed of dry grass, and exhibiting at a short distance the appearance of a haycock stuck up in the tree. The entrances to the nests are from beneath. They are built side by side, and when seen from below resemble a honeycomb.

At dawn of day on the following morning we continued our march through the venerable camel-dorn forest. The road was extremely heavy, consisting of soft loose sand. Having proceeded about six miles, emerging from the forest, we entered once more on a wide-spreading open country, covered in some parts with bushes, and in others only with grass. Another hour brought us to Little Chooi, a large saltpan, where we obtained water for ourselves and

cattle from a deep pit made by men. In sight were a few zebras, ostriches, and springboks. In the forenoon a number of cattle, belonging to Mahura, came to drink at the pit. Some of these carried enormous wide-spreading horns. Mahura and his tribe possess immense herds of cattle, the majority of which they "lifted" or obtained in war from other Bechuana tribes. Some years before this, Mahura, assisted by another tribe, had attacked Sobiqua, king of the Bawangketse, a tribe inhabiting the borders of the great Kalahari desert, whom they routed, and succeeded in driving off the majority of their vast herds. Upon this, Sobiqua and his tribe fled with the remainder of the cattle across a portion of the desert to the westward, and for some years located themselves on the borders of a vast inland lake. This mysterious lake the natives in the vale of Bakatla state to be situated due west from their position; while the natives of Bamangwato, situated two hundred and fifty miles to the northward, always pointed out to me the north-west as its position. They represented to me that the natives on its banks were possessed of canoes; that its waters were salt; and that every day the waters retired to feed, and again returned, by which I understood that this lake, whatever it may be, is affected by some tide.

At three P.M. we spanned, and held on till midnight with fine moonlight, crossing a desert and sandy country. In the vicinity of Chooi we passed an extensive range of

old pitfalls, formed by the natives for entrapping game. They were dug in the form of a crescent, and occupied an extent of nearly a quarter of a mile. On the march I observed some enormous trunks of trees that had been destroyed by fire in bygone years. On the following day we reached Loharon, an uninteresting and desolate spot, where we encamped for the day beside a pool of rain-water. Here I observed a few hartebeests, sassaybys, and zebras. On the 20th, having breakfasted, we in-spanned, and continued our march till sunset. We passed through a very level country, covered with detached bushes. The dulness of the scene, however, was enlivened by a wondrous flight of locusts, the largest I had ever beheld. The prospect was obscured by them as far as we could see, resembling the smoke arising from a thousand giant bonfires; while those above our heads darkened our path with a double flight—the one next the ground flying north, while the upper clouds of them held a southerly course. The dogs, as usual, made a hearty meal on them.

We continued our march by moonlight, halting at midnight in a vast open plain beside a small pool of rain-water. After breakfast I rode forth in quest of springboks, of which I bagged a couple. I fell in with blue and black wildebeests, zebras, ostriches, and blesboks. The plains here were bare and open, resembling the country frequented by the blesboks to the southward of

the Vaal, with which country I subsequently ascertained it to be connected, in a due southerly course, by an endless succession of similar bare plains, throughout the entire extent of which the blesbok and black wildebeest are abundant. While galloping after a herd of zebras, "The Immense Brute" put his foot into a hole, and came down with great violence on his head, pitching me over his bows. I saved my rifle at the risk of sacrificing my collar-bone; and would have escaped without further injury than the loss of a portion of the bark of my cheek, had not my horse described a somersault, coming down with the broad of his back on the calf of my right leg, and bruising it so severely as to incapacitate me from walking for several days. About midday we resumed our march, and in the evening we reached Great Chooi, a very large saltpan at present full of water. Here I found, for the first time, the bones and skull of a rhinoceros long killed. My interpreter informed me that the rhinoceros had long left that country; to his surprise, however, we discovered fresh spoor by the fountain. Continuing our march, on the 22nd we entered on a new description of country; boundless open plains being succeeded by endless forests of dwarfish trees and bushes, the ground slightly undulating, and covered with a variety of rich grasses and aromatic herbs. The old and seldom-trodden waggon-track which we followed seemed a favourite footpath for a troop of lions, their large and

heavy spoor being deeply imprinted in our path. At sundown we encamped on the Siklagole River, a periodical stream, in the gravelly bed of which fine spring-water could be obtained by digging. As we were in great want of flesh, my hungry pack being nearly starving, I resolved to rest my oxen on the following day, and hunt for eland, the spoor of several of which we discovered beside our encampment.

On the morning of the 23rd I rode east with after-riders and a packhorse. The country through which we passed resembled a vast interminable park, being adorned with a continued succession of picturesque dwarfish forest-trees single and in groups. Such, with the exception of a few grassy open plains, is the character of the country from Siklagole, as far as the mountains of Bakatla. We failed to fall in with elands, but I succeeded in bringing down two zebras and a hartebeest, which, along with sassaybys, oryx, and ostriches, now became daily more abundant. On the 31st we reached the Kurrichane mountain range. Having crossed these, we proceeded up a valley about three miles, when we reached a gorge in the mountains which connected this fine valley with the great strath or vale of Bakatla. Through this gorge ran a stream of the purest crystal water. Our road lay along the margin of this stream, across large masses of stone and ledges of rock, which threatened every moment the destruction of our waggons.

Following the stream for half a mile, we arrived at Mabotza, the kraal of Mosielely, king of the Bakatlas, a tribe of Bechuanas. Here I was kindly received by Dr. Livingstone, the resident missionary. The vale of Bakatla, which I had now reached, is one of the most beautiful spots in Africa. It is a broad and level strath extending from east to west, and bounded by picturesque rocky mountains, beautifully wooded to their summits. In parts the strath is adorned with groves and patches of beautiful forest-trees of endless variety; in others it is open, carpeted with a goodly coating of luxuriant grass. A large portion of the valley, opposite to the town, is cultivated by the Bakatla women, and a succession of extensive corn-fields stretched away to the northward of the kraal. These had lately been denuded of their crops, but a goodly show of pumpkins and water-melons still remained on the fields. The following day was Sunday, and I attended Divine service in a temporary place of worship that had been erected by the missionaries. It was amusing to remark, in the costume of the Bakatlas on this occasion, the progress of the march of civilization. All those who had managed to get hold of some European article of dress had donned it, some appearing in trousers without shirts, and others in shirts without trousers.

The 2nd of June was the coldest day I had experienced in Africa, a cutting cold wind blowing off the

Southern Ocean. On the morning of the 2nd I was waited upon by Mosielely, attended by a number of his nobility and others of the tribe, who flocked around my waggons importunately requesting snuff. The appearance of the chief was mild, but not dignified. One of his generals, with whom he seemed to be on very intimate terms, was a jolly-looking old warrior with a wall eye, and a face strongly marked with the small-pox. This man's name was "Siemi." He had killed about twenty men in battle with his own hand, and bore a mark of honour for every man. This mark was a line tattooed on his ribs. Mosielely presented me with a bag of sour milk, and requested that I would tarry with him for a few days for the purpose of trading. I informed him that I was now anxious to push on to the country of the elephants, but would trade with him on my return. This intimation seemed very much to disappoint the king, who was anxious to exchange karosses for guns and ammunition. But I had resolved to part with my muskets solely for ivory, which article Mosielely on this particular occasion did not possess.¹

¹ The Bakatlas work a great deal in iron, manufacturing various articles, with which they supply the neighbouring tribes. They obtain their iron from ore, which they procure by excavating in the surrounding mountains. This ore is smelted in crucibles, a great deal of the metal being wasted, and only the best and purest being preserved. They use a sort of double bellows, consisting of two bags of skin, by which the air is forced through the long tapering tubes of the two horns of the oryx. The person using the bellows

Dr. Livingstone informed me that large game was abundant on all sides to the northward of Bakatla. He stated that herds of elephants occasionally visited the territories of the adjoining chiefs, sometimes frequenting a district for half a summer; but that at present he was not aware of any elephants in the forests adjacent to Bakatla. He represented the distant and unexplored forests beyond Bamangwato, the territory of Sicomy, as being allowed by the natives to be the country where elephants were at all times abundant. There was also a prospect of obtaining there ivory in barter for my muskets. I accordingly resolved, in the first instance, to direct my attention mainly to elephants, and not to tarry in any district, however favourable, for the purpose of hunting other varieties of game. Dr. Livingstone stated that I should experience considerable difficulty in reaching Bamangwato, since there was no path nor track of any description to guide me thither. My only chance of getting there seemed to depend on being able to obtain Bechuana guides from Caachy, a subordinate chief of a

squats between the two bags, which he raises and depresses alternately, working one with each hand. Their hammer and anvil consist of two stones. They nevertheless contrive to turn very neat workmanship out of their hands, such as spears, battle-axes, assagais, knives, sewing-needles, &c. The men of this tribe also manufacture large wooden bowls, which they cut out of the solid piece, the tool they use for this purpose being a small implement shaped like an adze.

branch of the "Baquaina" tribe, then resident at a place called "Booby," situated about eighty miles to the north-west of Bakatla. Without these guides it would be almost impossible to proceed, as the waters were few and very far between. The probability, however, was that these guides would be refused, since it is the invariable policy of African chiefs to prevent all travellers from penetrating beyond themselves.

Bamangwato is distant upwards of two hundred miles to the northward of Bakatla, from which it is separated by rugged and apparently impassable mountain ranges, extensive sandy deserts, which are destitute of water, and vast and trackless forests. Isaac, my interpreter, already began to lose heart, and raised a thousand objections to my proceeding to so distant a country. He recommended my rather hunting in the territory of "Sichely," the paramount chief of the Baquaines, situated about fifty miles to the north of Bakatla, where he assured me we should find elephants. Perceiving that his remonstrances did not avail, and that I was inexorable, he proposed resigning his commission, and was with difficulty prevailed on by Dr. Livingstone to agree to accompany me farther.

On the 3rd I took leave of my kind friend Dr. Livingstone, and started for Bamangwato. I was accompanied by a large party of the Bakatla men and two Baquaines. They followed me in the hope of obtaining flesh, a report

having spread through the tribe that I was a successful hunter. The Bechuanas are extremely fond of flesh, which they consider the only food befitting men. Corn and milk they reckon the food of women. Having no flesh at home, and being seldom able to kill large game for themselves, they entertain great respect for those who kill plenty of venison for them, and they will travel to very great distances for the purpose of obtaining it. We proceeded in a westerly course, and held up the lovely valley of Bakatla, through open glades and patches of ancient forests.

I had ridden only a short distance across the valley when I fell in with a troop of blue wildebeests, one of which I wounded and immediately lost in rocky ground. I then rode on, and crossed a ridge of stony hills covered with thick jungle, after which I entered upon another grassy and well-wooded valley. Presently I observed seven majestic buck koodoos standing on the mountain side high above me. In trying to stalk these I disturbed a troop of graceful pallahs and a herd of zebras, which clattered along the mountain, and spoiled my stalk with the koodoos. I now observed a large herd of buffaloes reclining under a clump of mimosa-trees a little farther up the valley. Descending from my position, I secured my horse to a tree, and proceeded to stalk in on the buffaloes. While I was doing this, a herd of zebras, which I had not observed, got my wind and came

cantering through the cover within a few yards of me. When I reached the spot where I had seen the buffaloes they were gone ; having followed up the spoor, however, for a short distance, I overtook them ; when I shot the patriarch of the herd, which, as usual, brought up the rear.

Early on the 4th we inspanned and continued our march for Booby, a large party of savages still following the waggons. Before proceeding far I was tempted by the beautiful appearance of the country to saddle horses to hunt in the mountains westward of my course. I directed the waggons to proceed a few miles under guidance of the natives, and there await my arrival. I was accompanied by Isaac, who was mounted on the Old Grey, and carried my clumsy Dutch rifle of six to the pound. Two Bechuanas followed us, leading four of my dogs. Having crossed a well-wooded strath, we reached a little crystal river, whose margin was trampled down with the spoor of a great variety of heavy game, but especially of buffalo and rhinoceros. We took up the spoor of a troop of buffaloes, which we followed along a path made by the heavy beasts of the forest through a neck in the hills ; and emerging from the thicket, we beheld, on the other side of a valley which had opened upon us, a herd of about ten huge bull buffaloes. These I attempted to stalk, but was defeated by a large herd of zebras, which, getting our wind, charged past and started the buffaloes. I

ordered the Bechuanas to release the dogs ; and spurring Colesberg, which I rode for the first time since the affair with the lioness, I gave chase. The buffaloes crossed the valley in front of me, and made for a succession of dense thickets in the hills to the northward. As they crossed the valley, by riding hard I obtained a broadside shot at the last bull, and fired both barrels into him. He, however, continued his course, but I presently separated him, along with two other bulls, from the troop. My rifle being a two-grooved, which is hard to load, I was unable to do so on horseback, and followed with it empty, in the hope of bringing them to bay. In passing through a grove of thorny trees I lost sight of the wounded buffalo ; he had turned short and doubled back, a common practice with them when wounded. After following the other two at a hard gallop for about two miles, I was riding within five yards of their huge broad sterns. They exhaled a strong bovine smell, which came hot in my face. I expected every minute that they would come to bay, and give me time to load ; but this they did not seem disposed to do. At length, finding I had the speed of them, I increased my pace ; and going ahead, I placed myself right before the finest bull, thus expecting to force him to stand at bay ; upon which he instantly charged me with a low roar, very similar to the voice of a lion. Colesberg neatly avoided the charge, and the bull resumed his northward

course. We now entered on rocky ground, and the forest became more dense as we proceeded. The buffaloes were evidently making for some strong retreat. I, however, managed with much difficulty to hold them in view, following as best I could through thorny thickets. Isaac rode some hundred yards behind, and kept shouting to me to drop the pursuit, or I should be killed. At last the buffaloes suddenly pulled up, and stood at bay in a thicket within twenty yards of me. Springing from my horse, I hastily loaded my two-grooved rifle, which I had scarcely completed when Isaac rode up and inquired what had become of the buffaloes, little dreaming that they were standing within twenty yards of him. I answered by pointing my rifle across his horse's nose, and letting fly sharp right and left at the two buffaloes. A headlong charge, accompanied by a muffled roar, was the result. In an instant I was round a clump of tangled thorn-trees; but Isaac, by the violence of his efforts to get his horse in motion, lost his balance, and at the same instant, his girths giving way, himself, his saddle, and big Dutch rifle, all came to the ground together, with a heavy crash, right in the path of the infuriated buffaloes. Two of the dogs, which had fortunately that moment joined us, met them in their charge, and, by diverting their attention, probably saved Isaac from instant destruction. The buffaloes now took up another position in an adjoining thicket. They were

both badly wounded, blotches and pools of blood marking the ground where they had stood. The dogs rendered me assistance by taking up their attention, and in a few minutes these two noble bulls breathed their last beneath the shade of a mimosa grove. Each of them in dying repeatedly uttered a very striking, low, deep moan. This I subsequently ascertained the buffalo invariably utters when in the act of expiring.

On going up to them I was astonished to behold their size and powerful appearance. Their horns reminded me of the rugged trunk of an oak-tree. Each horn was upwards of a foot in breadth at the base, and together they effectually protected the skull with a massive and impenetrable shield. The horns, descending, and spreading out horizontally, completely overshadowed the animal's eyes, imparting to him a look the most ferocious and sinister that can be imagined. On my way to the waggons I shot a stag sassayby, and while I was engaged in removing his head a troop of about thirty doe pallahs cantered past me, followed by one princely old buck. Snatching up my rifle, I made a fine shot, and rolled him over in the grass.

Early in the afternoon I despatched men with a pack-horse to bring the finer of the two buffalo-heads. It was so ponderous that two powerful men could with difficulty raise it from the ground. The Bechuanas who had accompanied me, on hearing of my success, snatched up

their shields and assagais, and hastened to secure the flesh, nor did I see any more of them, with the exception of the two Baquaines, who remained with me, being engaged in a plot with my interpreter to prevent my penetrating to Bamangwato. Isaac did not soon forget his adventure with the buffaloes; and at night over the fire he informed my men that I was mad, and that any man who followed me was going head-long to his own destruction. At an early hour on the 5th I continued my march through a glorious country of hill and dale, throughout which water was abundant.

Beautifully wooded hills and mountains stretched away on every side; some of the mountains were particularly grand and majestic, their summits being surrounded by steep precipices and abrupt parapets of rock, the abodes of whole colonies of black-faced baboons, which, astonished to behold such novel intruders upon their domains, leisurely descended the craggy mountain sides for a nearer inspection of our caravan. Seating themselves together upon a broad ledge, they seemed to hold a council as to the propriety of permitting us to proceed farther through their territories. Having advanced about nine miles, I drew up my waggons on the bank of a rivulet, where the spoor of large game was extremely abundant. In the bed of the stream I discovered the scaly skin of a manis, which had been newly eaten by

some bird of prey. This extraordinary animal, which in its habits partakes of the nature of the hedgehog, is about three feet in length, and is covered all over with an impenetrable coat of mail, consisting of large rough scales about the size and shape of the husk of an artichoke; these overlap one another in an extraordinary and very beautiful manner. Its tail is broad and likewise covered with scales; on being disturbed it rolls itself into a ball: the manis is met with throughout the interior of South Africa, but it is rare and very seldom seen.

It was on the 4th of June that I beheld for the first time the rhinoceros. Having taken some coffee, I rode out unattended, with my rifle, and before proceeding far I fell in with a huge white rhinoceros with a large calf, standing in a thorny grove. Getting my wind, she set off at top speed through thick thorny bushes, the calf, as is invariably the case, taking the lead, and the mother guiding its course by placing her horn, generally about three feet in length, against its ribs. My horse shied very much at first, alarmed at the strange appearance of "Chukuroo," but by a sharp application of spur and jambok I prevailed upon him to follow, and presently, the ground improving, I got alongside, and, firing at the gallop, sent a bullet through her shoulder. She continued her pace with blood streaming from the wound, and very soon reached an impracticable thorny jungle,

where I could not follow, and instantly lost her. In half an hour I fell in with a second rhinoceros, being an old bull of the white variety. Dismounting, I crept within twenty yards, and saluted him with both barrels in the shoulder, upon which he made off, uttering a loud blowing noise, and upsetting everything that obstructed his progress.

Shortly after this I found myself on the banks of the stream beside which my waggons were outspanned. Following along its margin, I presently beheld a bull of the borèlé, or black rhinoceros, standing within a hundred yards of me. Dismounting from my horse I secured him to a tree, and then stalked within twenty yards of the huge beast under cover of a large strong bush. Borèlé, hearing me advance, came on to see what it was, and suddenly protruded his horny nose within twenty yards of me. Knowing well that a front shot would not prove deadly, I sprang to my feet and ran behind the bush. Upon this the villain charged, blowing loudly, and chased me round the bush. Had his activity been equal to his ugliness, my wanderings would have terminated here, but by my superior agility I had the advantage in the turn. After standing a short time eyeing me through the bush, he got a whiff of my wind, which at once alarmed him. Uttering a blowing noise, and erecting his insignificant yet saucy-looking tail, he wheeled about, leaving me master of the field, when

I sent a bullet through his ribs to teach him manners.¹

¹ Of the rhinoceros there are four varieties in South Africa, distinguished by the Bechuanas by the names of the borèlé or black rhinoceros, the keitloa or two-horned black rhinoceros, the muchocho or common white rhinoceros, and the kobaoba or long-horned white rhinoceros. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are extremely fierce and dangerous, and rush headlong and unprovoked at any object which attracts their attention. They never attain much fat, and their flesh is tough, and not much esteemed by the Bechuanas. Their food consists almost entirely of the thorny branches of the wait-a-bit thorns. Their horns are much shorter than those of the other varieties, seldom exceeding eighteen inches in length. They are finely polished with constant rubbing against the trees. The skull is remarkably formed, its most striking feature being the tremendous thick ossification in which it ends above the nostrils. It is on this mass that the horn is supported. The horns are not connected with the skull, being attached merely by the skin, and they may thus be separated from the head by means of a sharp knife. They are hard and perfectly solid throughout, and are a fine material for various articles, such as drinking cups, mallets for rifles, handles for turner's tools, &c. &c. The horn is capable of a very high polish. The eyes of the rhinoceros are small and sparkling, and do not readily observe the hunter, provided he keep to leeward of them. The skin is extremely thick, and only to be penetrated by bullets hardened with solder. During the day the rhinoceros will be found lying asleep or standing indolently in some retired part of the forest, or under the base of the mountains, sheltered from the power of the sun by some friendly grove of umbrella-topped mimosas. In the evening they commence their nightly ramble, and wander over a great extent of country. They usually visit the fountains between the hours of nine and twelve o'clock at night, and it is on these occasions that they may be most successfully hunted, and with the least danger. The black rhinoceros is subject to paroxysms of unprovoked fury, often ploughing up the ground

Finding that rhinoceroses were abundant in the vicinity, I resolved to halt a day for the purpose of hunting, and after an early breakfast on the 6th I rode south-east for several yards with its horn, and assaulting large bushes in the most violent manner. On these bushes they work for hours with their horns, at the same time snorting and blowing loudly, nor do they leave them in general until they have broken them into pieces. The rhinoceros is supposed by many, and by myself among the rest, to be the animal alluded to by Job, chap. xxxix. verses 10 and 11, where it is written, "Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?" evidently alluding to an animal possessed of great strength and of untamable disposition, for both of which the rhinoceros is remarkable. All the four varieties delight to roll and wallow in mud, with which their rugged hides are generally encrusted. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are much smaller and more active than the white, and are so swift that a horse with a rider on his back can rarely overtake them. The two varieties of the white rhinoceros are so similar in habits, that the description of one will serve for both; the principal difference consisting in the length and set of the anterior horn; that of the muchocho averaging from two to three feet in length, and pointing backwards; while the horn of the kobaoba often exceeds four feet in length, and inclines forward from the nose at an angle of 45° . The posterior horn of either species seldom exceeds six or seven inches in length. The kobaoba is the rarer of the two, and it is found very far in the interior, chiefly to the eastward of the Limpopo. Its horns are very valuable for loading rods, supplying a substance at once suitable for a sporting implement and excellent for the purpose. Both these varieties of rhinoceros attain an enormous size, being the animals next in magnitude to the elephant. They feed solely on grass, carry much fat, and their flesh is excellent, being preferable to beef. They are of a much milder and more inoffensive disposition than the black rhinoceros, rarely charging their pursuer. Their speed is very inferior

with the two Baquaines. They led me along the bases of the mountains, through woody dells and open glades, and we eventually reached a grand forest grey with age. Here we found abundance of spoor of a variety of game, and started several herds of the more common varieties. At length I observed an old bull eland standing under a tree. He was the first that I had seen, and was a noble specimen, standing about six feet high at the shoulder. Observing us, he made off at a gallop, springing over the trunks of decayed trees which lay across his path; but very soon he reduced his pace to a trot. Spurring my horse, another moment saw me riding hard behind him. Twice in the thickets I lost sight of him, and he very nearly escaped me; but at length, the ground improving, I came up with him, and rode within a few yards behind him. Long streaks of foam now streamed from his mouth, and a profuse perspiration had changed his sleek grey coat to an ashy blue. Tears trickled from his large dark eye, and it was plain that the eland's hours were numbered. Pitching my rifle to my shoulder, I let fly at the gallop, to that of the other varieties, and a person well mounted can overtake and shoot them. The head of these is a foot longer than that of the borèlé. They generally carry their heads low, whereas the borèlé, when disturbed, carries his very high, which imparts to him a saucy and independent air. Unlike the elephants, they never associate in herds, but are met with singly or in pairs. In districts where they are abundant, from three to six may be found in company, and I once saw upwards of a dozen congregated together on some young grass, but such an occurrence is rare.

and mortally wounded him behind; then spurring my horse, I shot past him on his right side, and discharged my other barrel behind his shoulder, when the eland staggered for a moment and subsided in the dust.¹ The two Baquaines soon made their appearance, and seemed delighted at my success. Having kindled a fire, they cut out steaks, which they roasted on the embers: I also cooked a steak for myself, spitting it upon a forked branch, the other end of which I sharpened with my knife and stuck into the ground.

¹ This magnificent animal is by far the largest of all the antelope tribe, exceeding a large ox in size. It also attains an extraordinary condition, being often burthened with a very large amount of fat. Its flesh is most excellent, and is justly esteemed above all others. It has a peculiar sweetness, and is tender and fit for use the moment the animal is killed. Like the gemsbok, the eland is independent of water, and frequents the borders of the great Kalahari desert in herds varying from ten to a hundred. It is also generally diffused throughout all the wooded districts of the interior where I have hunted. Like other varieties of deer and antelope, the old males may often be found consorting together apart from the females, and a troop of these, when in full condition, may be likened to a herd of stall-fed oxen. The eland has less speed than any other variety of antelope; and, by judicious riding, they may be driven to camp from a great distance. In this manner I have often ridden the best bull out of the herd, and brought him within gunshot of my waggons, where I could more conveniently cut up and preserve the flesh, without the trouble of sending men and pack-oxen to fetch it. I have repeatedly seen an eland drop down dead at the end of a severe chase, owing to his plethoric habit. The skin of the eland I had just shot emitted, like most other antelopes, the most delicious perfume of trees and grass.

Having eaten my steak, I rode to my waggons, where I partook of coffee, and having mounted a fresh horse I again set forth, accompanied by Carollus leading a pack-horse, to bring home the head of the eland and a supply of the flesh: I took all my dogs along with me to share in the banquet. We had not proceeded far when the dogs went ahead on some scent. Spurring my horse, I followed through the thorny bushes as best I might, and, emerging on an open glade, I beheld two huge white rhinoceroses trotting along before me. The dogs attacked them with fury, and a scene of intense excitement ensued. The Old Grey, on observing them, pricked up his ears and seemed only half inclined to follow, but a sharp application of the spur reminded him of his duty, and I was presently riding within ten yards of the stern of the largest, and sent a bullet through her back. The Old Grey shied considerably and became very unmanageable, and on one occasion, in consequence, the rhinoceros, finding herself hemmed in by a bend in a watercourse, turned round to charge: I had a very narrow escape. Presently, galloping up on one side, I gave her a bad wound in the shoulder, soon after which she came to bay in the dry bed of a river. Dismounting from my horse, I commenced loading, but before this was accomplished she was off once more. I followed her, putting on my caps as I rode, and coming up alongside I made a fine shot from the saddle, firing at the gallop.

The ball entered somewhere near her heart. On receiving this shot she reeled about, while torrents of blood streamed from her mouth and wounds, and presently she rolled over and expired, uttering a shrill screaming sound as she died, which rhinoceroses invariably do while in the agonies of death.

The chase had led me close in along the northern base of a lofty detached mountain, the highest in all that country. This mountain is called by the Bechuanas the Mountain of the Eagles. The eland which I had shot in the morning lay somewhere to the southward of this mountain, but far in the level forest. Having rounded the mountain, I began to recognise the ground, and presently I had the satisfaction to behold a few vultures soaring over the forest in advance, and, on proceeding a short distance farther, large groups of these birds were seated on the grey and weather-beaten branches of the loftiest old trees of the forest. This was a certain sign that the eland was not far distant; and on raising my voice and loudly calling on the name of Carollus, I was instantly answered by that individual, who, heedless of his master's fate, was actively employed in cooking for himself a choice steak from the dainty rump of the eland. That night I slept beneath the blue and starry canopy of heaven. My sleep was light and sweet, and no rude dreams or hankering cares disturbed the equanimity of my repose.

CHAPTER XII.

My Hottentots object to advance farther into the Interior—A Boar Hunt — We march through a charming Country — The Mountain Pass of Sesetabie — A Lion and Lioness inspect my Cattle, and the Lion pays for peeping — Hungry Hyænas sup upon the Cattle Furniture — The Camelopard — Description of its Habits — Booby, a Bechuana Kraal — Gun Medicine — Disastrous Finale to an Incantation — Native Conspiracy to prevent my farther Progress.

At an early hour on the 7th we arose, and, having loaded the pack-horse with a burden of flesh and fat, I despatched one of the Baquaines with him to camp. Carrollus and I then rode for the rhinoceros to secure the horn. On nearing the carcase, a noble bull-buffalo stood within thirty yards of me, but I had omitted to put on my caps. Lions had consumed a large part of the rhinoceros, and had sneaked off on hearing us approach, leaving, as is usual, matted locks from their shaggy grey manes sticking on the broken points of the projecting ribs. My dogs on scenting them ran barking angrily in the direction which the lions had held, springing up into the air with their hair bristling along their backs. With considerable difficulty we separated the horn of the muchocho from the skin by means of a long sharp knife. It was nearly

three feet in length, and measured almost a foot in diameter at the base. This being accomplished, we returned to camp. Here I found that Isaac had not been idle in forwarding his own views. I at once saw that my followers had something unusual on their minds; blackness and dismay were plainly written on every countenance. I had scarcely seated myself beside the fire, when Isaac approached me with a slow funereal step, and horror depicted in his face, and asked me if I had heard the news. I replied, What news? He went on to state that on the preceding evening two men of the Bamangwato tribe had passed my waggons on their way to Bakatla, to warn that tribe of the on-coming of the cruel and warlike Matabili (whose powerful chief, Moselekatse, has been so ably described in the pages of my fellow-sportsman Captain Harris). These they represented as having a few days previously attacked and plundered various Bechuana tribes to the northward, and that they were now advancing by rapid marches to devastate the country and murder the inhabitants of these parts.

This I at once knew to be a fabrication to prevent my penetrating farther, and I laughed at Isaac and told him he had dreamed it; to which he replied, "Yes, you will not listen to my advice, when you are warned of danger, but both you and your men will one day acknowledge the truth of my forebodings." I had considerable diffi-

culty in calming the minds of my followers, and prevailing on them to proceed farther with me.

In the afternoon we continued our journey to the northward, through a country of increasing loveliness. Beautifully wooded hills and valleys, captivating to the sportsman's eye, stretched away on every side, with rivulets of crystal waters in the valleys and the spoor of large game very abundant. On the march my dogs dashed up the wind, and in two minutes the peaceful forest was disturbed by their united voices, angrily barking around some animal which they had brought to bay. Snatching up my rifle, I rushed to the scene of conflict, and found them actively baying a fierce and grisly boar, whose foaming jaws were adorned with a pair of tusks so enormous as to resemble horns, each of them being upwards of a foot in length. It was some time before I could obtain a clear shot, owing to the eagerness of my dogs, but at length an opening occurred, when I dropped the grim boar with a bullet in the heart. Night had scarcely set in when lions commenced to roar in concert on every side of us, and continued their deep and awful music until the sun rose next day.

On the 8th we performed a short march before breakfast, halting beside a stream of delicious water. In the afternoon we resumed our march, and halted at sundown beside the broad and sandy bed of a periodical river, through which ran a crystal stream, where we

started a troop of eight or ten bull buffaloes, one of which my dogs immediately brought to bay, when I finished him with two balls behind the shoulder.

On the 9th we continued our march through a lovely and romantic country, steering for Sesetabie, an extremely bold and picturesque pass, in the lofty mountains in which the "Kouloubeng" or "river of wild boars," a tributary to the Ngotwani, takes its rise. As the waggons proceeded I walked in advance with my rifle, and presently brought down a sassayby. While following a herd of pallahs, the waggons got ahead of me ; and on overtaking them, I found them drawn up beside a sweet little rocky river, at a short distance from the mountain pass, which from its appearance we expected would prove a barrier to our farther progress.

Kleinboy and Isaac had started in pursuit of a large herd of upwards of one hundred buffaloes, which had thundered up the river-side on the approach of the waggons ; presently we heard them fire, and on their return to the waggons they stated that they had mortally wounded an enormous bull. They had certainly wounded a buffalo, but, as I afterwards ascertained, the ball had struck him on the hind leg, within a few inches of the ground.

Having breakfasted, I went out on foot with Isaac, and, directing him to follow up the spoor of his wounded buffalo, I proceeded to ascend a lofty mountain-range to the west-

ward of the pass. Here I fell in with large colonies of baboons and a few klipspringers. I also saw for the first time green parrots and grey squirrels. A number of interesting birds, possessing melodious voices, and plumage more or less gaudy, adorned the groves and forests since I had crossed the range of the Kurrichane mountains; but throughout my career in the forests of the interior my attention was necessarily so taken up with the pursuit of larger, and to me more interesting, objects of the chase, that I could rarely bestow upon the feathered creation more than a short and passing glance of admiration. Having ascended to the summit of the highest mountain of the chain, I obtained a glorious view of the surrounding country. It was truly a fair and boundless prospect; beautifully wooded plains and mountains stretched away on every side to an amazing distance, until the vision was lost among the faint blue outlines of the distant mountain-ranges. Throughout all this country, and vast tracts beyond, I had the satisfaction to reflect that a never-ending succession of herds of every species of noble game which the hunter need desire pastured there in undisturbed security; and as I gazed I felt that it was all my own, and that I at length possessed the undisputed sway over a forest, in comparison with which the tame and herded narrow bounds of the wealthiest European sportsman sink into utter insignificance.

Returning to my waggons, I ascertained from Isaac, who

had arrived there a few minutes previously, that he had failed to find his wounded buffalo. The truth was that he had not been in quest of it, fearing to follow up the spoor; a wounded buffalo being deemed by the Bechuanas as dangerous as a lion. Having inspanned, we proceeded to take the bold mountain-pass of Sesetabie, and wound along the margin of the stream, which danced and sparkled down its abrupt and rocky channel, forming a pleasing succession of babbling streams and foaming waterfalls. As we advanced farther up the gorge the path became extremely contracted, there being barely sufficient room to admit of the waggons passing between the steep and rocky brink of the stream, and the rugged base of the lofty, inaccessible mountain which towered on our left. On the opposite side the mountain forming the eastern bulwark of the pass rose precipitately from the water's edge, presenting an impassable barrier. It was a wild and lonely glen, hitherto untrodden, save by the wild denizens of the forests, which from time immemorial had roamed these solitudes. Large stones and masses of granite rock obstructed our progress, and several hours were occupied in rolling these to one side before we could venture to bring on the waggons. The rocky way was imprinted with the spoor of the large herd of buffaloes which my followers had that morning disturbed, and while my men were engaged with the granite boulders, having detected blood upon the stones, I proceeded to take up the spoor

of the wounded buffalo, taking several couple of my dogs along with me. Having followed it a short distance up the pass, I reached a point where two streams met from opposite directions, and here the buffalo had held along the reed-clad margin of the western branch of the stream, which wound along the depths of a lonely and densely wooded valley, embosomed amid rocky mountains. At this spot my dogs, not being led, snuffed up the wind, and instantly disappeared over the ridge above me. Having proceeded on the spoor some distance, still finding blood, which enabled me to distinguish it from the spoor of others of the herd which had accompanied him, I suddenly heard trampling in the grove on the rocky hill-side above me; and on looking up I beheld four splendid old bull buffaloes, walking leisurely along: I made a running stalk after these, and was presently within twenty yards of them, when, upon my whistling shrilly, the buffaloes halted, and looked about at me. Selecting the finest head, I fired at the centre of his forehead, and in another instant the buffalo was rolling down the mountain side a lifeless mass. I then returned to the spoor I had been following, and was shortly joined by my dogs, which had heard the report of my rifle. I had not proceeded far when I started the wounded bull out of a bed of reeds; he limped along the margin of the stream on three legs, one of his hind legs being shot off above the spurs. My dogs at once brought him to bay,

and I finished him with a shot behind the shoulder. The sun was some time under before I reached the waggons, which we drew up on a narrow open glade above the junction of the two streams. All night long lions and hyænas prowled around, and the dogs maintained an incessant barking. At dawn of day on the following morning I despatched a part of my men with a packhorse and all the dogs for a supply of flesh, and the finer head of the two fallen buffaloes; they found them, as I had anticipated, half consumed by lions and hyænas.

It was a cold, windy morning, and I lay in my waggon longer than usual. My other Hottentots thought proper to leave their charge, and go in quest of honey under the guidance of a garrulous honey-bird. I had lain about twenty minutes in my waggon after they had all started, and was occupied in reading a book, when suddenly I heard the oxen come trotting along in front of the waggons, as if sharply driven. On raising my head from my pillow I perceived a lioness following within twenty yards of them, and next moment her mate, a venerable-looking lion, with a shaggy mane which swept the ground, appeared in the yellow grass in front of the oxen, waiting for her to put them to flight. The plot had evidently been preconcerted between them, this being the usual manner in which the lion attacks the buffaloes. Fortunately the oxen would not run for them, and the lions seemed surprised at the confidence of their game. On

springing to my feet and shouting to them, they joined one another, and stood together beneath a shady tree within a hundred and twenty yards of the waggons. My horses were pasturing at a short distance from the lions, feeding towards me, and on these they seemed now to meditate an attack, their attention being divided between the horses and myself. In such a position of affairs I considered it high time to give these bold intruders a hint whose cattle they were so carefully herding. Snatching up my two-grooved rifle, which at all times hung loaded in my waggon, I at once ran forward under cover of a convenient bushy tree which intervened, and on gaining this bush I was within seventy yards of the lions. Here a forked branch afforded an admirable rest. I placed my rifle in the fork, and, taking the old lion low, I let fly, hitting him in the shoulder; the two then wheeled about, and, bounding forward with angry growls, disappeared among the trees.

From the cool state I was in when I fired, and the steady aim which the forked branch had afforded me, I felt convinced that the lion, if not dead, must be mortally wounded, but I prudently resolved not to proceed in quest of him alone. Presently some of my men, who had gone to the carcase of a buffalo I had slain the previous day, returned bringing the dogs; and, having informed them of what had happened, I proceeded to take up the spoor of the wounded lion. On

reaching the spot where the lions had stood, my dogs at once commenced barking angrily and looking sharply around in every direction, their hair bristling on their backs. I at once discovered blood, which increased as I proceeded from small red drops to large frothy blotches ; and before advancing two hundred yards, on approaching a dense green bush, my dogs, which led the way, sprang suddenly to one side, barking with great vehemence. By this I knew that the lion was dead, and, on cautiously rounding the bush, taking care at the same time to give it a wide berth, I had the satisfaction to behold a princely lion stretched lifeless on the ground. He was in the prime of life, having fine sharp teeth ; and it being now the dead of winter he carried the most luxuriant coat of hair, the rankness of his flowing mane exceeding in beauty anything I had hitherto seen. I considered myself extremely fortunate in having secured so noble a specimen of the lion with so little danger, and I at once set men to work to unrobe him, which they were not long in accomplishing.

About midday we inspanned, and trekked on till sundown through a country the most wild and primitive that can be conceived. We proceeded under the guidance of two Bechuanas, who had joined us on the preceding day, and were proceeding to Booby. The two Baquaines who had accompanied me from Bakatla had forsaken my standard after I had shot the bull eland ; so liberal a

supply of flesh being far too powerful a temptation to admit of their proceeding beyond it. On gaining the neck of the mountain-pass our march for a few miles wound through beautifully-wooded grassy hills, after which we descended into a rugged and densely wooded valley, intersected with deep watercourses which threatened momentarily the destruction of my axletrees. So dense was the jungle that we were obliged repeatedly to halt the waggons, and cut out a pathway with our axes before they could advance. Emerging from this valley, we entered upon a more level country, still, however, densely covered with forest-trees and bushes in endless variety. Here water was very abundant. We crossed several streams and marshes whose margins were a mass of the spoor of wild animals; that of rhinoceros, buffalo, and camelopard being most abundant. At one stream the fresh-spoor of a troop of lions was deeply imprinted in the wet sand.

Although I am now acquainted with the native names of a number of the trees of the African forests, yet of their scientific names I am utterly ignorant. The shoulders and upper ridges of the mountains throughout all that country are profusely adorned with the graceful sandal-wood tree, famed on account of the delicious perfume of its timber. The leaf of this tree emits at every season of the year a powerful and fragrant perfume, which is increased by bruising the leaves in the hand.

Its leaf is small, of a light silvery grey colour, which is strongly contrasted by the dark and dense evergreen foliage of the moopooroo-tree, which also adorns the upper ridges of the mountain ranges. This beautiful tree is interesting, as producing the most delicious and serviceable fruit that I have met with throughout those distant parts; the poorer natives subsisting upon it for several months, during which it continues in season. The moopooroo is of the size and shape of a very large olive. It is at first green, but, gradually ripening, like the Indian mango, it becomes beautifully striped with yellow, and when perfectly ripe its colour is the deepest orange. The fruit is sweet and mealy, similar to the date, and contains a small brown seed. It covers the branches, and when ripe the golden fruit beautifully contrasts with the dark green leaves of the tree which bears it. Besides the moopooroo, a great variety of fruits are met with throughout these mountains and forests, all of which are known to, and gathered by, the natives. I must, however, forego a description of them, as it would swell these pages to undue bounds. Throughout the densely wooded dells and hollows of the mountains the rosewood-tree occurs, of considerable size and in great abundance.

Throughout the night we were beset by a daring troop of hyænas, which, notwithstanding the vigilance of my dogs, consumed a part of my buffalo trektow and also a number of straps from off the yokes. The dogs kept

up a loud and incessant barking until the day dawned, when I shot one of the hyænas, and the rest made off.

On the 11th we were in the yoke soon after daybreak. It was a bitterly cold morning, ice a quarter of an inch in thickness covering the pools of water. We were now clear of the extensive mountain-ranges through which our road had wound since leaving Bakatla, and were approaching towards the south-eastern limits of the great Kalahari desert, on whose borders Booby is situated. We continued our march, steering north-west; in which direction the distant blue hills (pointed out to me as the position of Booby) shot abruptly above the unvaried sameness of the intervening forest scenery. To the west, one eternal ocean-like expanse of grey forest stretched away in a level and unbroken plain, terminated only by the far horizon. Having performed a march of three hours, we crossed a small stream, where I outspanned to breakfast.

This day was to me rather a memorable one, as the first on which I saw and slew the lofty graceful-looking giraffe or camelopard, with which, during many years of my life, I had longed to form an acquaintance.¹

¹ These gigantic and exquisitely beautiful animals, which are admirably formed by nature to adorn the fair forests that clothe the boundless plains of the interior, are widely distributed throughout the interior of Southern Africa, but are nowhere to be met with in great numbers. In countries unmolested by the intrusive

Although we had now been travelling many days through the country of the giraffe, and had marched through forests in which their spoor was abundant, our

foot of man, the giraffe is found generally in herds varying from twelve to sixteen; but I have not unfrequently met with herds containing thirty individuals, and on one occasion I counted forty together; this, however, was owing to chance, and about sixteen may be reckoned as the average number of a herd. These herds are composed of giraffes of various sizes, from the young giraffe of nine or ten feet in height, to the dark chesnut-coloured old bull of the herd, whose exalted head towers above his companions, generally attaining to a height of upwards of eighteen feet. The females are of lower stature and more delicately formed than the males, their height averaging from sixteen to seventeen feet. Some writers have discovered ugliness and a want of grace in the giraffe, but I consider that he is one of the most strikingly beautiful animals in the creation; and when a herd of them is seen scattered through a grove of the picturesque parasol-topped acacias which adorn their native plains, and on whose uppermost shoots they are enabled to browse by the colossal height with which nature has so admirably endowed them, he must indeed be slow of conception who fails to discover both grace and dignity in all their movements. There can be no doubt that every animal is seen to the greatest advantage in the haunts which nature destined him to adorn, and amongst the various living creatures which beautify this fair creation I have often traced a remarkable resemblance between the animal and the general appearance of the locality in which it is found. This I first remarked at an early period of my life, when entomology occupied a part of my attention. No person following this interesting pursuit can fail to observe the extraordinary likeness which insects bear to the various abodes in which they are met with. Thus, among the long green grass we find a variety of long green insects, whose legs and antennæ so resemble the shoots emanating from the stalks of the grass that

eyes had not yet been gifted with a sight of "Tootla" himself; it was therefore with indescribable pleasure that, on the evening of the 11th, I beheld a troop of these interesting animals.

Our breakfast being finished, I resumed my journey through an endless grey forest of camel-dorn and other trees, the country slightly undulating and grass abundant. A little before the sun went down my driver remarked to me, "I was just going to say, Sir, that that old tree was a camelopard." On looking where he

it requires a practised eye to distinguish them. Throughout sandy districts varieties of insects are met with of a colour similar to the sand which they inhabit. Among the green leaves of the various trees of the forest innumerable leaf-coloured insects are to be found; while, closely adhering to the rough grey bark of these forest-trees, we observe beautifully coloured grey-looking moths of various patterns, yet altogether so resembling the bark as to be invisible to the passing observer. In like manner among quadrupeds I have traced a corresponding analogy, for, even in the case of the stupendous elephant, the ashy colour of his hide so corresponds with the general appearance of the grey thorny jungles which he frequents throughout the day, that a person unaccustomed to hunting elephants, standing on a commanding situation, might look down upon a herd and fail to detect their presence. And further, in the case of the giraffe, which is invariably met with among venerable forests, where innumerable blasted and weather-beaten trunks and stems occur, I have repeatedly been in doubt as to the presence of a troop of them, until I had recourse to my spyglass; and on referring the case to my savage attendants, I have known even their optics to fail, at one time mistaking these dilapidated trunks for camelopards, and again confounding real camelopards with these aged veterans of the forest.

pointed, I saw that the old tree was indeed a camelopard, and, on casting my eyes a little to the right, I beheld a troop of them standing looking at us, their heads actually towering above the trees of the forest. It was imprudent to commence a chase at such a late hour, especially in a country of so level a character, where the chances were against my being able to regain my waggons that night. I, however, resolved to chance everything ; and directing my men to catch and saddle Colesberg, I proceeded in haste to buckle on my shooting-belt and spurs, and in two minutes I was in the saddle. The giraffes stood looking at the waggons until I was within sixty yards of them, when, galloping round a thick bushy tree, under cover of which I had ridden, I suddenly beheld a sight the most astounding that a sportsman's eye can encounter. Before me stood a troop of ten colossal giraffes, the majority of which were from seventeen to eighteen feet high. On beholding me they at once made off, twisting their long tails over their backs, making a loud switching noise with them, and cantered along at an easy pace, which, however, obliged Colesberg to put his best foot foremost to keep up with them.

The sensations which I felt on this occasion were different from anything that I had before experienced during a long sporting career. My senses were so absorbed by the wondrous and beautiful sight before me that I rode along like one entranced, and felt in-

clined to disbelieve that I was hunting living things of this world. The ground was firm and favourable for riding. At every stride I gained upon the giraffes, and after a short burst at a swingeing gallop I was in the middle of them, and turned the finest cow out of the herd. On finding herself driven from her comrades and hotly pursued, she increased her pace, and cantered along with tremendous strides, clearing an amazing extent of ground at every bound; while her neck and breast, coming in contact with the dead old branches of the trees, were continually strewing them in my path. In a few minutes I was riding within five yards of her stern, and, firing at the gallop, I sent a bullet into her back. Increasing my pace, I next rode alongside, and, placing the muzzle of my rifle within a few feet of her, I fired my second shot behind the shoulder; the ball, however, seemed to have little effect. I then placed myself directly in front, when she came to a walk. Dismounting, I hastily loaded both barrels, putting in double charges of powder. Before this was accomplished she was off at a canter. In a short time I brought her to a stand in the dry bed of a watercourse, where I fired at fifteen yards, aiming where I thought the heart lay, upon which she again made off. Having loaded, I followed, and had very nearly lost her; she had turned abruptly to the left, and was far out of sight among the trees. Once more I brought her to a stand, and dismounted from my

horse. There we stood together alone in the wild wood. I gazed in wonder at her extreme beauty, while her soft dark eye, with its silky fringe, looked down imploringly at me, and I really felt a pang of sorrow in this moment of triumph for the blood I was shedding. Pointing my rifle towards the skies, I sent a bullet through her neck. On receiving it she reared high on her hind legs and fell backwards with a heavy crash, making the earth shake around her. A thick stream of dark blood spouted far from the wound, her colossal limbs quivered for a moment, and she expired.

I had little time to contemplate the prize I had won. Night was fast setting in, and it was very questionable if I should succeed in regaining my waggons ; so, having cut off the tail of the giraffe, which was adorned with a bushy tuft of flowing black hair, I took "one last fond look," and rode hard for the spoor of the waggons, which I succeeded in reaching just as it was dark.

No pen nor words can convey to a sportsman what it is to ride in the midst of a troop of gigantic giraffes : it must be experienced to be understood. They emitted a powerful perfume, which in the chase came hot in my face, reminding me of the smell of a hive of heather honey in September. The greater part of this chase led through bushes of the wait-a-bit thorn of the most virulent description, which covered my legs and arms with blood long before I had killed the giraffe. I rode as usual in

the kilt, with my arms bare to my shoulder. It was Chapelpark of Badenoch's old grey kilt, but in this chase it received a death-blow which it never afterwards recovered.

On the 12th we performed two long marches through thickly wooded plains, the spoor of camelopard being extremely abundant. On the 13th we cast loose the cattle at dawn of day. Breakfast being finished, we inspanned, and having proceeded about eight miles through the forest, steering for a range of rocky mountains, we reached a gorge in the same. Here we crossed a small river; and having followed its banks about three miles, we reached Booby, a residence of Bechuanas, being a branch of the tribe of the Baquaines, and governed by a subordinate chief, who was then absent on a visit. I was, however, welcomed by his nephew, named Caachy, a man of pleasing exterior and prepossessing manners, who shortly afterwards became, and now is, chief of that tribe.

As the manner in which Caachy succeeded to the chieftainship was peculiar, I may here relate the circumstances attending it. Throughout all the Bechuana tribes an absurd belief prevails in witchcraft and supernatural agencies of every kind. They also believe that for every transaction there is a medicine which will enable the possessor to succeed in his object. Thus they think those among themselves who work in

iron, do so under the power of medicine. Their rain-makers by the power of their medicines can propitiate the friendly clouds during the protracted droughts of summer. They have medicines to protect them from the lightning's stroke, from the deadly bite of the viper, and from the fatal spring of the lion. They further believe that there is a medicine for guns, the possession of which will cause the gun to shoot well ; and likewise one for the gunpowder, which will give it strength.

During my visit to Booby I obtained from the natives some interesting specimens of native arms and other curiosities, for which they required gunpowder, their chief having in his possession one or two muskets. When the chief and his men proceeded to use my powder, they missed all they fired at ; the Bechuana mode of firing being to withdraw the face from the gun, from a natural impulse of fear, before drawing the trigger, and to look back over the left shoulder instead of at the animal they expect to kill. The cause of their missing they at once ascribed to the powder, which they affirmed required medicine. Accordingly, the chief and all the long-headed men in Booby assembled in the forum ; and having placed the unworthy gunpowder upon a large kaross, they all sat round it, and commenced a variety of ceremonies and incantations with a view of imparting to it that power which they considered it had lost. At length some wiseacre among the soothsayers

informed the king that the presence of fire was indispensable on the occasion. Fire was accordingly introduced along with the other medicines, and a censer of hot embers was passed frequently over the powder. Suddenly, however, an unlucky spark sprang from the censer into the heap of powder, which of course instantly exploded, and, the quantity being very considerable, the Booby men and their chief were blown heels over head on every side—several of the party, and among others the chief, being so severely burnt, that they shortly died. So much for Bechuana medicines.

The kraal of Booby is encompassed on three sides by rocky hills, which to their summits are densely clad with sandal-wood trees. The sides of these mountains in parts are extremely precipitous, and are the abodes of baboons and klipspringers. On the march, as we approached Booby, I took my rifle and ascended to the base of one of these precipices, where I shot two immense baboons. One of them was sitting on the shelf of a rock very high above me; and on receiving the shot he fell about a hundred feet without a break. The valleys between the mountains are extensively cultivated by the women, as also a large level piece of ground to the north-eastward of the kraal. The costume of this tribe was the same I have already described as worn by the Bechuanas; but I remarked that they used the atrocious mixture of red clay and grease more freely than

their neighbours. The Booby men flocked around my waggons, evidently much gratified with so novel a sight, and continued with me until nightfall. Shortly after I reached Booby a party of Baquaines arrived from Sichely. They had been sent to endeavour to dissuade me from visiting Bamangwato, and to inform me that Sichely had ivory and karosses, with which to purchase all my guns; and that, above all, he wished me to promise to reserve my big Dutch rifle for him. I informed these men that I was determined to visit Sicomy, but that I would keep the Dutch rifle for their chief, as he requested it.

Having informed Caachy that I intended to march next day, he expressed surprise, and said I made his heart sore. That evening there was a meeting of all the wise men in Booby to consult how I could best be prevented from journeying on to Bamangwato. On the morning of the 14th I felt far from well, probably having drunk too much of Caachy's beer on the preceding evening. Before I was inclined to turn out, the regent with all his great men were standing thick around my waggons. I pretended to be asleep; so they kindled fires, around which they squatted. Presently I arose, and gave the regent his breakfast. I told him that I wished him to send men along with me to Bamangwato. He replied that there was war in that country, and that he was afraid of Moselekatse. I then said, that, though he would not give me men, I possessed

medicine which would enable me to discover the way without his assistance ; and I informed him that, if he persisted in withholding guides, I should inform Sicomy, the great and paramount chief of Bamangwato, that they endeavoured to prevent white men from visiting his domains. Upon this Caachy changed his story, and said that four men should accompany me to Bamangwato, and return with me. His plan however was, that these men should guide me in a wrong direction ; and pretending that the waters had failed, they were eventually to lead me to Sichely, who resided to the eastward of Booby.

This being arranged, I gave Caachy some presents, and requested him to take charge of my buffalo and other heads until my return, which he promised to do, and ordered men to bear them directly to his kraal. About midday we inspanned and left Booby, accompanied by nearly the whole tribe, every man carrying two or three assagais and a battle-axe. They followed us in the hope that I would shoot large game for them. The guides at first held north-east ; but presently drawing off that course, and steering due east, I halted, and said that was not the road to Bamangwato. They replied, they held that course on account of water. I then directed them to place an assagai on the ground with its head pointing to Bamangwato. Thereupon the savages laid down one of their assagais, and, having pretended for some minutes to be discussing among them-

selves the exact position of Bamangwato, they ended by pointing it due east, declaring that Bamangwato lay in that direction. I told them that I had a needle in my pocket which I had rubbed with medicine, by which I could tell if their spear pointed to Sicomy's country. Knowing that Bamangwato lay a little to the east of north, I said that by turning the needle three times round my left wrist it would point a little to the left-hand side of the country I required. On hearing this the savages looked at one another with surprise, and pressed round me to see if my needle possessed the power I represented. Slipping my fingers into my shooting-belt, I then pulled out my pocket compass, and, passing it three times round my left wrist with the utmost gravity, I whistled shrilly; and on opening the compass I placed it on the ground before them. Snatching one of their assagais, I placed it beside the compass a little to the east of north, and told them that it was there Bamangwato lay. They were struck with astonishment, and at once considered me as working by supernatural agency.

Having done this, I inquired of the guides if they would lead me to waters in that direction. They all shouted that that was the desert, and that no man had ever found water there. Having said this, they all turned right about, and, retreating for about two hundred yards, they squatted on the ground. Isaac and I then approached them; but they sat in silence, and

looked on the ground. I asked them why they all sat thus. They answered that they would proceed no farther with me. I replied that I was happy to hear it, and that I could find the way better without them. I returned to my waggons, and ordered my men to turn about and retrace their steps to the nearest water. The savages then requested me to halt and speak with them. I told them to go home to their captain, as their presence troubled me; and having proceeded a few hundred yards, I encamped beside a pool of water.

It was plain to me that Isaac, my interpreter, was in league with the Baquaines in their designs against me; but as I did not then intend to part with him, because his presence gave confidence to my people, I deemed it best to pretend that I believed him to be sincere. My flesh being exhausted, I resolved to halt for a day for the purpose of hunting before proceeding farther; and having obtained a good supply, to steer through the forests by compass a little to the east of north, and to search for water with my horses in advance of the waggons. I felt poorly in health, and was much troubled in mind. My situation was by no means an enviable one. I was far in the interior of Africa, alone and friendless, surrounded by a tribe of men who would do anything to prevent my attaining my object; but fear restrained them from using violence. What I most dreaded was their stealing my oxen or horses, which they could easily

accomplish, as I was encamped in a thick forest; my men also were faint-hearted and anxious to return towards home.

That night I slept little, from vexation and anxiety. The whole tribe of the Booby men lay encamped beside us. They lay on the ground around a number of fires, with a hedge of thorny bushes placed in a semicircle to windward of each party. After breakfast I rode east to hunt, accompanied by Kleinboy leading a pack-horse; about thirty of the Bechuanas followed us in the hope of flesh. Having proceeded about two miles, I perceived a large herd of blue wildebeests and zebras. I signed to the Bechuanas to lie down, and then rode slowly forward as if to pass to leeward of the herd. Having probably never before seen a horseman, they allowed me to approach within a hundred yards, when I sprang from my horse, and with my first barrel dropped a fat blue wildebeest. The Bechuanas then rushed forward, but I beckoned to them to lie down. Having loaded I galloped in pursuit of the troop, and after riding a short distance hard in their dusty wake, through a thinly-wooded part of the forest, I pulled up and was on my feet just as the leading cow wheeled about. I fired right and left, and shot two fat old cows. Both ran a short distance and fell. The Bechuanas now came up with Kleinboy, greatly delighted at my success. I presented them with the bull and one of the cows for their chief,

and, having placed the remaining cow upon my pack-horse, we returned to camp.

Here I found Caachy with all his retinue : they had come out to endeavour by cunning speaking to lead me astray. Having saluted Caachy, I said that I had yesterday promised to kill some game for him, and that I had now fulfilled my word, upon which he thanked me. I then remarked that his men did not lead me as Dr. Livingstone had told me to ride ; to which he replied that the road was circuitous, and that they led me so on account of water. At length he had almost persuaded me to follow his guides, but I said I would rest till to-morrow, having determined that, as I had no friend whom I might consult, I would revolve the subject in my mind that night, and determine finally in the morning. Caachy then drank coffee with me and departed. In the evening I inquired of the guides concerning the waters and the distances betwixt them. They replied that the first water was a moderate day's journey, but after that I must ride more than two days without water : they also persevered in pointing to the east as my course. I now plainly saw that their intention was to lead me far astray, and finally to bring me to Sichely, their own paramount chief. I therefore resolved to adhere to my first resolution of steering my own course by the compass, but I kept this intention secret, fearing that they might steal some of my oxen.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Guides try to mislead me — The Cattle and Horses dying from Thirst — Search for Water — Melancholy Anticipations — Directed to a Pool by the flight of Birds — Chase and kill a Giraffe — Wandering Bechuanas point out my right Course — Miserable Condition of the Natives — Game Pitfalls — Mimosa Grove smashed by Elephants — A Rhinoceros charges me — Abundance of large Game — Lost in the Forest.

On the morning of the 16th a large party of Caachy's men were still encamped beside us, and were under the impression that they had succeeded in prevailing upon me to follow them. Having filled all my water-casks, I ordered my men to inspan, the Bechuanas cracking their jokes and fancying that I should ride east as they led; but to their astonishment, having inspanned, I told them that they had better all return to their captains, as I would shoot no more game for them, and I then ordered my men to ride for a conspicuous tree in the distance, bearing N.N.E. The Bechuanas sat still for some time to see how I would steer, and presently they shouldered their assagais and followed in our wake. This was a bold step on my part: the country looked very unlikely for water, and the Bechuanas

swore that there was none for seven days' journey in that direction. Our march lay through a boundless forest, with no hill nor landmark to give me an idea where to search for water. Fortune, however, followed me here as usual : if I had lived all my life in the country I could not have taken a more direct course for the spot I wished to reach. After we had proceeded some miles, a rising ground arose in our path, from the summit of which I fancied that a view might be obtained of the country in advance. This view only served to damp my hopes, the prospect exhibiting one slightly undulating, ocean-like expanse of forest and dense thorny jungles.

We halted for a few minutes to breathe the oxen, when the Bechuanas all came up, and sat down on the ground beside us. I asked them why they had not gone home as I had told them. They replied that they followed me because they were afraid that I should lose myself and my oxen. We held on, steering by compass N.N.E. All the Bechuanas now forsook me except the four ill-favoured men whom Caachy had pointed out to me as my guides. These four, contrary to my expectations, followed in our wake at some distance. I walked a hundred yards in advance of the waggons with my compass in my hand, having ordered the men to follow my footsteps. After travelling for several hours the country became more open, and presently we entered upon a wide tract that had been recently burned by the Bakalahari, or wild

inhabitants of the desert. Here the trees and bushes stood scorched and burnt, and there was not a blade of grass to cheer the eye—blackness and ashes stretched away on every side wherever I turned my anxious glance. I felt my heart sink within me as I beheld in dim perspective my famished and thirsty oxen returning some days hence over this hopeless desert, all my endeavours to find water having failed, and all my bright hopes of elephant-hunting dashed and crowned with bitter disappointment: it was indeed a cheerless prospect. I had no friend to comfort or advise me, and I could hear my men behind me grumbling, and swearing that they would return home; the guides, who had now come up, asking them why they followed me to destruction.

At length we reached the farther side of this dreary waste of ashes, but now an equally cheerless prospect was before me. We entered a vast forest, grey with extreme age, and so thick that we could not see forty yards in advance. We were obliged occasionally to halt the waggons and cut down trees and branches to admit of their passing; and to make matters still worse, the country had become extremely heavy, the waggons sinking deep in soft sand. My men began to show a mutinous spirit by expressing their opinions aloud in my presence. I remonstrated with them, and told them that, if I did not bring them to water next day before the sun was under, they might turn the oxen on their spoor.

We continued our march through this dense forest until nightfall, when I halted for the night beside a wide-spreading tree: here I cast my oxen loose for an hour, and then secured them on the yokes by moonlight.

I felt very sad and unhappy in my mind, for I considered that the chances were against me, and I shuddered at the idea of returning to the colony, after coming so very far, without shooting or even seeing what my heart most ardently desired, viz. a wild bull elephant free in his native jungle. I took some wine, and, coming to the fire which the men had kindled for the night beneath a magnificent old cameel-dorn tree, I affected great cheerfulness and contentment, and, laughing at the four Bechuanas, I told them that I was not a child that they should lead me astray, but that I was an old warrior and a cunning hunter, and could find my way in strange lands. I laughed, but it was the laugh of despair, for I expected that next evening they would be laughing at me, on seeing me compelled to retrace my steps. One of the greatest difficulties that presented itself was, that, if I rode in advance to search for water, it would be almost impossible to find my way back to the waggons through that vast and trackless forest. I went to bed, but tried in vain to sleep. Care and anxiety kept me awake until a little before morning, when I fell asleep for a short time and dreamt that I had ridden in advance and found water. Day dawned, and I awoke in sorrow.

My hopes were like a flickering flame ; care sat upon my brow. I cast loose my horses and oxen, and prepared some breakfast ; I then directed my men to catch "The Cow" and "Colesberg," and give them some corn. I asked the guides if they could lead me to water in a northerly direction, when they replied that no man ever found water in the desert. I did not talk more with them, but ordered my men to remain quiet during the day and listen for shots, lest I should lose my way in returning ; and having given them ammunition to reply, I saddled up and held N.N.E. through thick forest, accompanied by Kleinboy. The ground was heavy, being soft sand, and the grass grew at intervals in detached bunches. We rode on without a break or a change, and found no spoor of wild animals to give me hope. I saw one duiker, but these antelopes are met with in the desert, and are independent of water.

At last we reached a more open part of the forest, and emerging from the thicket I perceived a troop of six or eight beautiful giraffes standing looking at us about two hundred yards to my right ; but this was no time to give them chase, which I felt very much inclined to do. I allowed them to depart in peace, and continued my search for water. In this open glade I found two or three vleys that had once contained a little water, but they were now hard and dry. Re-entering the dense forest, we held one point more to the east, and rode on as

before. For miles we continued our search, until my hopes sank to a very low ebb; and Kleinboy swore that we should never regain the waggons. At length I perceived a sassayby walking before me: this antelope drinks every day;—"fresh vigour with the hope returned." I once more pressed forward and cantered along, heedless of the distance which already intervened betwixt me and my camp and the remonstrances of my attendant, who at last reined up his jaded steed, and said that he would not follow me farther to my own destruction. I then pointed to the top of a distant grey tree that stretched its bare and weather-beaten branches above the heads of its surrounding comrades, and said, that, if we saw nothing to give us hope when we reached that tree, I would abandon the search, and hunt during that season in Sichely's mountains to the east of Booby.

But fate had ordained that I should penetrate farther into the interior of Africa; and before I reached the old grey tree I observed a small flight of Namaqua partridges flying across my path in a westerly direction. It was impossible to tell, until I should see a second flock of these, flying at a different angle, whether the first flock had come from, or were going to, water. For this I accordingly watched, nor watched long in vain. A considerable distance ahead of me I detected a second flight of these birds likewise flying westerly; and it was evident, from their inclination, that they held for the same

point as the first had done. Shortly afterwards the first flight returned, flying high above our heads, uttering their soft melodious cry of "pretty dear, pretty dear." I then rode in the direction from which the birds had come, and before proceeding far we discovered a slight hollow running north and south. This I determined to follow, and presently I discovered fresh spoor of a rhinoceros: this was a certain sign that water was somewhere not very distant.

Once more my dying hopes revived. I looked north at the glorious sky, which on this particular day was quite different from anything I had beheld for months. It was like one of those glorious days when the bright blue sky in my own dark land is seen through ten thousand joyous fleecy clouds, and all nature seems to strive in its sunny hour to make poor unhappy man forget his cares and sorrows. I took it as a favourable omen, and, stirring my good and lively steed, I cantered along the glade. The hollow took a turn, on rounding which I perceived that I was in an elevated part of the forest; and I, for the first time, obtained a distant view of the surrounding scenery. Far as the eye could strain it was all forest without a break; but there was now an undulating country before me, instead of the hopeless level through which I had come. I felt certain of success. We soon discovered vleys that had recently contained water; and at last a large pool of excellent water,

enough to supply my cattle for several days. This was to me a joyous moment; it was a grand step towards attaining my object, and, as my difficulties had seemed to increase, my wish and determination to overcome them had become stronger. I knew that, whether I reached Bamangwato or not, if I could now only manage to travel north about eight days' journey I should fall in with elephants.

I was extremely fortunate in regaining my waggons, which I did without a turn in my course. On reaching them I at first pretended not to have discovered water; and I said to the guides, "There is nothing but dense wood in this country; can you not show me water? my oxen will die." They replied that they knew the country from infancy, and that if I wanted water I must travel till sunset, steering south of east. I then surprised them by saying, "Now I see that you wish to lead me astray; for I have seen abundance of water, and I will find my way to Bamangwato, though you do all in your power to prevent me." Having inspanned, we held for the water, which I succeeded in reaching at a late hour. I still felt very anxious and full of care; but this first bold and successful step seemed to have made a strong impression on the guides, who still followed in our wake. It appeared to me that the orders they had received from their chief were, to endeavour to lead me astray, and bring me to

Sichely ; but that, in the event of my finding the way myself, they were to accompany me to Sicomy to ensure his friendship and to convince him of their chief's sincerity. On the morning of the 18th, shortly after the day dawned, I was lying awake thinking whether I should hunt or explore the country in advance, my men having as usual wasted their food and already consumed the bull wildebeest which I had shot for them two days previously, when suddenly I heard the voices of men a little distance down the glade. Fortune seemed determined to favour me. The guides, who sat by our fire, had not heard the voices ; if they had been aware of men being near us they would have run to meet them, and warned them to lead me astray. Springing from my bed, I hastily donned my attire, and, proceeding in the direction of the voices, I discovered a party of ten Bechuanas squatted round a fire which they had just kindled. These men belonged to Booby ; they had been hunting jackals at a place called Boötlonamy, which is halfway from Booby to Bamangwato, and they were now returning home with their spoils. They at once pointed out to me the correct line of march for Bamangwato, and advised me of a fine vley in the forest one march in advance.

Having breakfasted, I inspanned, and after trekking for about six hours through dense forest we reached the vley. On the march it was necessary to have constant recourse to our axes to clear a path for the waggons. I

was much delighted with the little loch to which we then came : it covered about an acre, in shape a circle, and its margin was imprinted with the fresh spoor of a variety of wild animals, such as giraffe, rhinoceros, buffalo, sas-sayby, pallah, zebra, lion, &c. We encamped beneath two wide-spreading shady trees, and I at once saddled up, and rode forth with Kleinboy to hunt, our flesh being at an end. I had ridden about half a mile in a north-easterly course, through shady groves of mokala-trees, when suddenly I observed a stately giraffe walk slowly across my path, and crop the leaves from the upper branches of a mokala-tree about a hundred yards in advance. This was a fine look-out : with hasty hand I shifted my saddle from "Sunday" to the Old Grey, and ordering Kleinboy to set the packsaddle on "Sunday," and listen for shots, I rode slowly towards the giraffe. As I advanced I perceived another giraffe standing looking at me a little to my left, which gave the alarm by starting off, when I stirred my steed, and on rounding an intervening clump of trees I came full in sight of a troop of eight giraffes, cantering before me. In another minute I was in the middle of them ; and selecting a fine fat cow, I rode hard at her, and fired my first shot at the gallop. She got it through her ribs, and the blood flowed freely. Again and again I broke her from the troop, and again she joined them. At length I fired my second shot at her stern ; after which, by heading her, I brought

her to a stand, when I sprang from the fidgety, snorting Old Grey, and, hastily loading both barrels, I fired right and left for her heart. Her colossal frame shook convulsively for a few seconds, when, tottering forward, she subsided in the dust with tremendous violence.

Four signal-shots brought Kleinboy and the packhorse, and also Isaac with the four guides. The chase was all in thick forest, and had led me to within a few hundred yards of the waggons. The hungry guides seemed enchanted at the prospect of such a banquet. They at once kindled a fire, and slept that night beside the carcase. I returned to the waggons with my horses laden with flesh. My mind was now once more at rest. I went to my bed and slept soundly. During the night lions roared around us.

On the 19th I rose at dawn of day, and took a stroll through the forest. Here I found some old dung of elephants; and observed several full-grown trees torn up by the roots, and others that had been shivered by the gigantic strength of those animals. The guides, finding that they prevailed nothing, at length volunteered to lead me to Bamangwato by a northerly course, and promised that I should not lack for water. We inspanned, and held on till sundown, proceeding in a north-easterly course, when we halted in dense forest without water. Our march lay through an interesting country well adapted for hunting the eland and giraffe.

The forest was in many places thin and open, with here and there gigantic old trees of picturesque appearance standing detached, some half-dead, and others falling to pieces from age. The soil was soft yet firm, and admirably suited for riding. The spoor of eland and giraffe was abundant.

On the 20th we inspanned at dawn of day, and having proceeded about five miles we reached a miserable little kraal or village of Bakalahari. Here was a vley of water, beside which we outspanned. Starvation was written in the faces of these inhabitants of the forest. In their vicinity were a few small gardens, containing water-melons and a little corn. Occasionally they have the luck to capture some large animal in a pitfall, when for a season they live in plenty. But as they do not possess salt, the flesh soon spoils, when they are compelled once more to roam the forest in quest of fruits and roots, on which, along with locusts, they in a great measure subsist. In districts where game is abundant, they often construct their pits on a large scale, and erect hedges in the form of a crescent, extending to nearly a mile on either side of the pit. By this means the game may easily be driven into the pitfalls, which are carefully covered over with thin sticks and dry grass ; and thus whole herds of zebras and wildebeests are massacred at once, which capture is followed by the most disgusting banquets, the poor starving savages gorging and surfeiting in a manner

worthy only of the vulture or hyæna. They possess no cattle, and, if they did, the nearest chief would immediately rob them. All that part of the country abounded with the pitfalls made by these and others of the Bakalahari. Many of these had been dug expressly for the giraffe, and were generally three feet wide, and ten long; their depth was from nine to ten feet. They were placed in the path of the camelopard, and in the vicinity of several of these we detected the bones of giraffes, indicating the success that had attended their formation.

At midday we resumed our march, halting at sunset without water. The first part of this march lay through dense forest, where we were obliged to cut a pathway with our axes. Here the spoor of eland was abundant. In the evening we passed through an open tract very thinly wooded, where I saw abundance of springbok and blue wildebeest. At midnight the dogs giving chase to some animal, I sprang out of bed; and following them in my shirt, I found them standing over a jackal. The guides skinned him, and, having baked him in the ashes, they consumed him.

On the 22nd, ordering my men to move on to the fountain of Boötlonamy, I rode forth with Ruyter, and held east through a grove of lofty and wide-spreading mimosas, most of which were more or less damaged by the gigantic strength of a troop of elephants,

which had passed there about twelve months before. Having proceeded about two miles with large herds of game on every side, I observed a crusty-looking old bull borèlé, or black rhinoceros, cocking his ears one hundred yards in advance. He had not observed us; and soon after he walked slowly towards us, and stood broadside to, eating some wait-a-bit thorns within fifty yards of me. I fired from my saddle, and sent a bullet in behind his shoulder, upon which he rushed forward about one hundred yards in tremendous consternation, blowing like a grampus, and then stood looking about him. Presently he made off. I followed, but found it hard to come up with him. When I overtook him I saw the blood running freely from his wound.

The chase led through a large herd of blue wildebeests, zebras, and springboks, which gazed at us in utter amazement. At length I fired my second barrel, but my horse was fidgety, and I missed. I continued riding alongside of him, expecting in my ignorance that at length he would come to bay, which rhinoceroses never do; when suddenly he fell flat on his broadside on the ground, but, recovering his feet, resumed his course as if nothing had happened. Becoming at last annoyed at the length of the chase, as I wished to keep my horses fresh for the elephants, and being indifferent whether I got the rhinoceros or not, as I observed that his horn was completely worn down with age and the violence of his





The Black Rhinoceros' Giving Chase.

disposition, I determined to bring matters to a crisis ; so, spurring my horse, I dashed ahead, and rode right in his path. Upon this the hideous monster instantly charged me in the most resolute manner, blowing loudly through his nostrils ; and although I quickly wheeled about to my left, he followed me at such a furious pace for several hundred yards, with his horrid horny snout within a few yards of my horse's tail, that my little Bushman, who was looking on in great alarm, thought his master's destruction inevitable. It was certainly a very near thing ; my horse was extremely afraid, and exerted his utmost energies on the occasion. The rhinoceros, however, wheeled about and continued his former course ; and I, being perfectly satisfied with the interview which I had already enjoyed with him, had no desire to cultivate his acquaintance any further, and accordingly made for camp. We left the fountain of Boötlonamy the same day, and marched about six miles through an old grey forest of mimosas, when we halted for the night. Large flocks of guinea-fowls roosted in the trees around our encampment, several of which I shot for my supper.

On the 23rd we inspanned by moonlight, and continued our march through a thinly-wooded level country. It was a lovely morning ; the sun rose in great splendour, and the sky was beautifully overcast with clouds. Having proceeded about ten miles, the country became thickly covered with detached forest-trees and groves of wait-a-bit

thorns. The guides now informed us that the water, which is called by the Bechuanas "Lepeby," was only a short distance in advance ; upon which I saddled steeds, and rode ahead with the Bushman, intending to hunt for an hour before breakfast. Presently we reached an open glade in the forest, where I observed a herd of zebras in advance ; and on my left stood a troop of springboks, with two leopards watching them from behind a bush. I rode on, and soon fell in with a troop of hartebeests, and, a little after, with a large herd of blue wildebeests and pallahs. I followed these for some distance, when they were reinforced by two other herds of pallahs and wildebeests. Three black rhinoceroses now trotted across my path. Presently I sprang from my horse, and fired right and left at a princely bull blue wildebeest. He got both balls, but did not fall ; and I immediately lost sight of him in the dense ranks of his shaggy companions. The game increased as we proceeded, until the whole forest seemed alive with a variety of beautifully coloured animals. On this occasion I was very unfortunate ; I might have killed any quantity of game if venison had been my object ; but I was trying to get a few very superior heads of some of the master bucks of the pallahs. Of these I wounded four select old bucks, but in the dust and confusion caused by the innumerable quantity of the game I managed to lose them all.

We had now ridden many miles from the waggons ;

and feeling faint from want of food, I dropped the chase in disgust, and, without looking at my compass, ordered the Bushman to go ahead. My attention had been so engrossed with the excitement of the pursuit, that I had not the remotest idea of the course I had taken, and the whole country exhibited such an aspect of sameness, that there was no landmark nor eminence of any description by which to steer. Having ridden many miles through the forest, I at length asked the Bushman, in whom on such occasions I generally placed great confidence, if he was sure he was riding in the right direction, and, as he appeared quite confident, I allowed him to proceed. At length he said that we had gone a little too far to the left, and led me away several miles to the right, which was westerly; whereas the waggon eventually proved to be a long way to the east. I felt convinced that we were wrong, and, reining up, a discussion arose between us, the Bushman still maintaining that we must ride west, whilst I was certain that our course should be east. I now adopted my own opinion, and, having ridden many miles in an easterly direction, we were at one time close upon the waggon, when the thick-headed Bushman declared that if I persevered we should never see the waggon again, and I with equal stupidity yielded to his advice, and a south-westerly course was once more adopted. Having ridden for many miles, I again reined up, and again told the Bushman we were wrong; upon which he

for the first time acknowledged that he knew nothing at all about the matter, but stated it to be his impression that we ought to ride farther to the west. My head was so confused that I lost all recollection of how we had ridden; and while I was deliberating what I should do, I observed a volume of smoke a long way to the north, which I at once imagined had been kindled by my followers to guide their lost master to the waggons.

With revived spirits, I stirred my jaded steed, and made for the smoke; but, alas! this only served to lead me farther astray. After riding many miles in that direction, I discovered that the fire was at an amazing distance, and could not have been kindled by my men; it was the wild Bakalahari of the desert burning the old dry grass. I was now like a seaman in a hurricane—at my wit's end—I knew not how to ride nor what to do. The sun, which had just risen when I left the waggons, was about to set. There was no landmark whatever by which to steer; I might wander for days, and not discover water.

To find the waggons was comparatively a trifle. I thought little of them; it was the thought of water that harrowed my mind. Already the pangs of thirst began to seize me. I had ridden all day, under the hot sun, and had neither eaten nor drunk since early the preceding evening. I felt faint and weary; and my heart sank as horrible visions of a lingering death by mad-

dening thirst arose before me. Dismounting from my horse, I sat down to think what I should do. I knew exactly by my compass the course we had been steering since we left Booby. I accordingly resolved to ride south-west for many miles, the course of the waggons having been north-east, and then to send Ruyter across the country a little to the north of west, while I should hold a corresponding course in an easterly direction. By this means one of us could not fail to find the spoor, and I arranged that at nightfall we should meet at some conspicuous tree. Having thus resolved, I mounted my horse, which was half dead with thirst and fatigue, and, having ridden south-west for several miles, I and Ruyter separated at a conspicuous tree, and rode in opposite directions. Before riding far I recognised the country as being the spot where I had seen the leopards in the morning. I at once followed Ruyter, and fired several signal shots, which he fortunately heard, and soon joined me. We then rode due east, and eventually, to my inexpressible gratification, we discovered the spoor of the waggons, which we reached after following it for about four miles in a north-easterly direction.

Our poor horses were completely exhausted, and could barely walk to the camp. I found my waggons drawn up beside the strong fountain of Lepeby, which, issuing from beneath a stratum of white tufous rock, formed an extensive deep pool of pure water, adorned on one side

with lofty green reeds. This fountain was situated at the northern extremity of a level bare vley, surrounded by dense covers of the wait-a-bit thorns. Such a peculiar sameness characterized the country, that a person wandering only a few hundred yards from the fountain would have considerable difficulty in regaining it. It was night when I reached the waggons, and two or three cups of coffee soon restored me to my wonted vigour.

On the following morning, from earliest dawn until we trekked, which we did about ten A.M., large herds of game kept pouring in to drink from every side, completely covering the open space, and imparting to it the appearance of a cattle-fair; blue wildebeests, zebras, sassaybys, pallahs, springboks, &c., capered fearlessly up to the water, troop after troop, within two hundred yards of us. In former years a tribe of Bechuanas had frequented this fountain, and I beheld the skeletons of many rhinoceroses and of one elephant bleaching in the sun; but the powerful and cruel Matabili had attacked the tribe, and driven them to seek a home elsewhere. I shot a pallah and a wildebeest, which we secured behind the waggons. About ten A.M. we inspanned, and within a mile of Lepeby we passed through another similar open vley, containing a strong fountain of delicious water. We continued our march till sundown through an undulating open country, thinly covered with detached trees and thorny bushes, and encamped in a sandy desert without water.

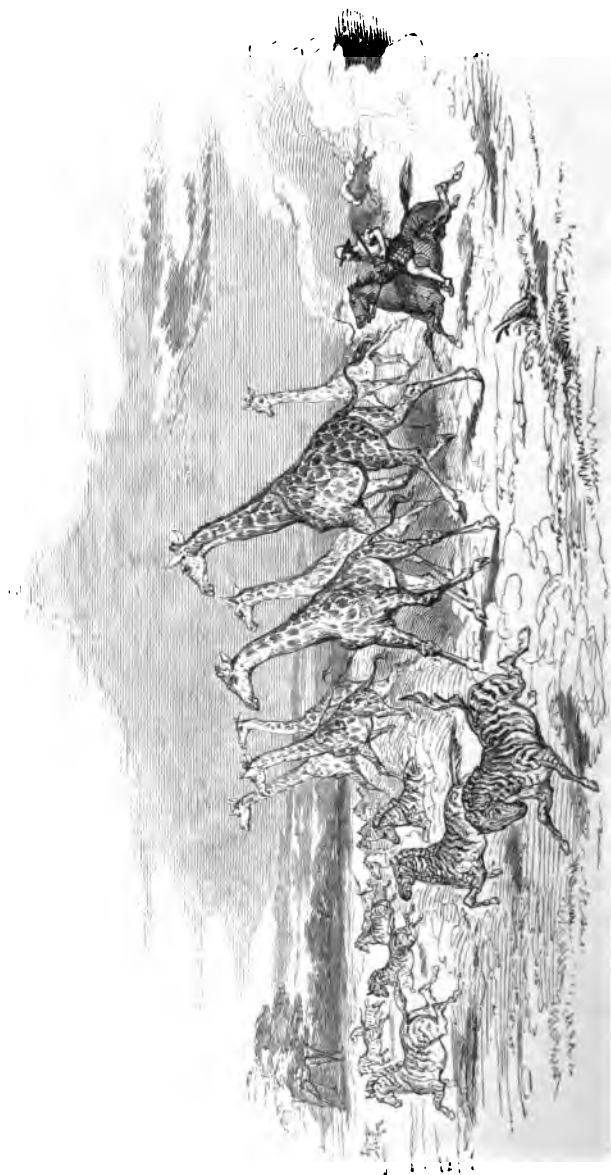
CHAPTER XIV.

The Bamangwato Mountains — The Elephants' Fountain — A troop of colossal Giraffes — Elephants drinking by Night — Habits of the African Elephant — Elephant Hunt — A Bull shot after a dangerous Encounter — Cutting out the Tusks — Extraordinary Rocks — Mountain-retreat of Sicomy, King of Bamangwato — His Cunning — Barter Muskets for Ivory — His Majesty's curious Gun-practice — Trading for Native Weapons.

ON the 25th, at dawn of day, we inspanned, and trekked about five hours in a north-easterly course, through a boundless open country sparingly adorned with dwarfish old trees. In the distance the long-sought mountains of Bamangwato at length loomed blue before me. We halted beside a glorious fountain, which at once made me forget all the cares and difficulties I had encountered in reaching it. The name of this fountain was Massouey, but I at once christened it "the Elephant's own Fountain." This was a very remarkable spot on the southern borders of endless elephant forests, at which I had at length arrived. The fountain was deep and strong, situated in a hollow at the eastern extremity of an extensive vley, and its margin was surrounded by a level stratum of solid old red sandstone. Here and there lay a thick layer of soil

upon the rock, and this was packed flat with the fresh spoor of elephants. Around the water's edge the very rock was worn down by the gigantic feet which for ages had trodden there.

The soil of the surrounding country was white and yellow sand, but grass, trees, and bushes were abundant. From the borders of the fountain a hundred well-trodden elephant footpaths led away in every direction, like the radii of a circle. The breadth of these paths was about three feet; those leading to the northward and east were the most frequented, the country in those directions being well wooded. We drew up the waggons on a hillock on the eastern side of the water. This position commanded a good view of any game that might approach to drink. I had just cooked my breakfast, and commenced to feed, when I heard my men exclaim, "Almagtig keek de ghroote clomp cameel;" and, raising my eyes from my sassayby stew, I beheld a truly beautiful and very unusual scene. From the margin of the fountain there extended an open level vley, without a tree or bush, that stretched away about a mile to the northward, where it was bounded by extensive groves of wide-spreading mimosas. Up the middle of this vley stalked a troop of ten colossal giraffes, flanked by two large herds of blue wildebeests and zebras, with an advanced guard of pallahs. They were all coming to the fountain to drink, and would be within rifle-shot of the waggons before I



Camelopard hunting at Mussouey.

could finish my breakfast. I however continued to swallow my food with the utmost expedition, having directed my men to catch and saddle Colesberg. In a few minutes the giraffes were slowly advancing within two hundred yards, stretching their graceful necks, and gazing in wonder at the unwonted waggons. Grasping my rifle, I now mounted Colesberg, and rode slowly towards them. They continued gazing at the waggons until I was within one hundred yards of them, when, whisking their long tails over their rumps, they made off at an easy canter. As I pressed upon them they increased their pace; but Colesberg had much the speed of them, and before we had proceeded half a mile I was riding by the shoulder of the dark-chestnut old bull, whose head towered high above the rest. Letting fly at the gallop, I wounded him behind the shoulder; soon after which I broke him from the herd, and presently, going ahead of him, he came to a stand. I then gave him a second bullet, somewhere near the first. These two shots had taken effect, and he was now in my power, but I would not lay him low so far from camp, so, having waited until he had regained his breath, I drove him half-way back towards the waggons. Here he became obstreperous; so, loading one barrel, and pointing my rifle towards the clouds, I shot him in the throat, when, rearing high, he fell backwards and expired. This was a magnificent specimen of the giraffe, measuring upwards

of eighteen feet in height. I stood for nearly half an hour engrossed in the contemplation of his extreme beauty and gigantic proportions; and, if there had been no elephants, I could have exclaimed, like Duke Alexander of Gordon when he killed the famous old stag with seventeen tine, "Now I can die happy." But I longed for an encounter with the noble elephants, and I thought little more of the giraffe than if I had killed a gemsbok or an eland.

In the afternoon I removed my waggons to a correct distance from the fountain, and drew them up among some bushes about four hundred yards to leeward of the water. In the evening I was employed in manufacturing hardened bullets for the elephants, using a composition of one of pewter to four of lead; and I had just completed my work when we heard a troop of elephants splashing and trumpeting in the water. This was to me a joyful sound; I slept little that night.

On the 26th I arose at earliest dawn, and having fed four of my horses I proceeded with Isaac to the fountain to examine the spoor of the elephants which had drunk there during the night. A number of the paths contained fresh spoor of elephants of all sizes, which had gone from the fountain in different directions. We reckoned that at least thirty of these gigantic quadrupeds had visited the water during the night.

We hastily returned to camp, where, having break-

fasted, I saddled up, and proceeded to take up the spoor of the largest bull elephant, accompanied by after-riders and three of the guides to assist in spooring. I was also accompanied by my dogs. Having selected the spoor of a mighty bull, the Bechuanas went ahead, and I followed them. It was extremely interesting and exciting work. The foot-print of this elephant was about two feet in diameter, and was beautifully visible in the soft sand. The spoor at first led us for about three miles in an easterly direction, along one of the sandy footpaths, without a check. We then entered a very thick forest, and the elephant had gone a little out of the path to smash some trees, and to plough up the earth with his tusks. He soon, however, again took the path, and held along it for several miles.

We were on rather elevated ground, with a fine view of a part of the Bamangwato chain of mountains before us. Here the trees were large and handsome, but not strong enough to resist the inconceivable strength of the mighty monarchs of these forests. Almost every tree had half its branches broken short by them, and at every hundred yards I came upon entire trees, and these the largest in the forest, uprooted clean out of the ground, or broken short across their stems. I observed several large trees placed in an inverted position, having their roots uppermost in the air. Our friend had here halted, and fed for a long time upon a large wide-

spreading tree which he had broken short across within a few feet of the ground. After following the spoor some distance farther through the dense mazes of the forest, we got into ground so thickly trodden by elephants that we were baffled in our endeavours to trace the spoor any farther; and after wasting several hours in attempting by casts to take up the proper spoor, we gave it up, and with a sorrowful heart I turned my horse's head towards camp.

Having reached the waggons, while drinking my coffee I reviewed the whole day's work, and felt much regret at my want of luck in my first day's elephant hunting, and I resolved that night to watch the water, and try what could be done with elephants by night-shooting. I accordingly ordered the usual watching-hole to be constructed; and having placed my bedding in it, repaired thither shortly after sundown. I had lain about two hours in the hole, when I heard a low rumbling noise like distant thunder, caused (as the Bechuanas affirmed) by the bowels of the elephants which were approaching the fountain. I lay on my back, with my mouth open, attentively listening, and could hear them ploughing up the earth with their tusks. Presently they walked up to the water, and commenced drinking within fifty yards of me. They approached with so quiet a step, that I fancied it was the footsteps of jackals which I heard; and I was not aware of their presence until I

heard the water, which they had drawn up in their trunks and were pouring into their mouths, dropping into the fountain. I then peeped from my sconce with a beating heart, and beheld two enormous bull elephants, which looked like two great castles, standing before me. I could not see very distinctly, for there was only starlight. Having lain on my breast some time taking my aim, I let fly at one of the elephants, using the Dutch rifle carrying six to the pound. The ball told loudly on his shoulder, and uttering a loud cry he stumbled through the fountain, when both made off in different directions.

All night large herds of zebras and blue wildebeests capered around me, coming sometimes within a few yards. Several parties of rhinoceroses also made their appearance. I felt a little apprehensive that lions might visit the fountain, and every time that hyænas or jackals lapped the water I looked forth, but no lions appeared. At length I fell into a sound sleep, nor did I again raise my head until the bright star of morn had shot far above the eastern horizon.

Before proceeding further with my narrative, it may here be interesting to make a few remarks on the African elephant and his habits. The elephant is widely diffused through the vast forests, and is met with in herds of various numbers. The male is very much larger than the female, consequently much more difficult to kill. He is

provided with two enormous tusks. These are long, tapering, and beautifully arched; their length averages from six to eight feet, and they weigh from sixty to a hundred pounds each. In the vicinity of the equator the elephants attain to a greater size than to the southward; and I am in the possession of a pair of tusks of the African bull elephant, the larger of which measures ten feet nine inches in length, and weighs one hundred and seventy-three pounds. The females, unlike Asiatic elephants in this respect, are likewise provided with tusks. The price which the largest ivory fetches in the English market is from 28*l.* to 32*l.* per hundred and twelve pounds. Old bull elephants are found singly or in pairs, or consorting together in small herds, varying from six to twenty individuals. The younger bulls remain for many years in the company of their mothers, and these are met together in large herds of from twenty to a hundred individuals. The food of the elephant consists of the branches, leaves, and roots of trees, and also of a variety of bulbs, of the situation of which he is advised by his exquisite sense of smell. To obtain these he turns up the ground with his tusks, and whole acres may be seen thus ploughed up. Elephants consume an immense quantity of food, and pass the greater part of the day and night in feeding. Like the whale in the ocean, the elephant on land is acquainted with, and roams over, wide and extensive tracts. He is extremely particular in

always frequenting the freshest and most verdant districts of the forest ; and when one district is parched and barren, he will forsake it for years and wander to great distances in quest of better pasture.

The elephant entertains an extraordinary horror of man, and a child can put a hundred of them to flight by passing at a quarter of a mile to windward ; and when thus disturbed, they go a long way before they halt. It is surprising how soon these sagacious animals are aware of the presence of a hunter in their domains. When one troop has been attacked, all the other elephants frequenting the district are aware of the fact within two or three days, when they all forsake it, and migrate to distant parts, leaving the hunter no alternative but to inspan his waggons, and remove to fresh ground. This constitutes one of the greatest difficulties which a skilful elephant-hunter encounters. Even in the most remote parts, which may be reckoned the head-quarters of the elephant, it is only occasionally, and with inconceivable toil and hardship, that the eye of the hunter is cheered by the sight of one. Owing to habits peculiar to himself, the elephant is more inaccessible, and much more rarely seen, than any other game quadruped, excepting certain rare antelopes. They choose for their resort the most lonely and secluded depths of the forest, generally at a very great distance from the rivers and fountains at which they drink. In dry and warm weather they visit these waters

nightly ; but in cool and cloudy weather they drink only once every third or fourth day. About sundown the elephant leaves his distant midday haunt, and commences his march towards the fountain, which is probably from twelve to twenty miles distant. This he generally reaches between the hours of nine and midnight ; when, having slaked his thirst and cooled his body by spouting large volumes of water over his back with his trunk, he resumes the path to his forest solitudes. Having reached a secluded spot, I have remarked that full-grown bulls lie down on their broadsides, about the hour of midnight, and sleep for a few hours. The spot which they usually select is an anthill, and they lie around it with their backs resting against it ; these hills, formed by the white ants, are from thirty to forty feet in diameter at their base. The mark of the under tusk is always deeply imprinted in the ground, proving that they lie upon their sides. I never remarked that females had thus lain down, and it is only in the more secluded districts that the bulls adopt this practice ; for I observed that, in districts where the elephants were liable to frequent disturbance, they took repose standing on their legs beneath some shady tree. Having slept, they then proceed to feed extensively. Spreading out from one another, and proceeding in a zigzag course, they smash and destroy all the finest trees in the forest which happen to lie in their course. The number of goodly trees which a herd of

bull elephants will thus destroy is utterly incredible. They are extremely capricious, and on coming to a group of five or six trees they break down not unfrequently the whole of them, when, having perhaps only tasted one or two small branches, they pass on and continue their wanton work of destruction. I have repeatedly ridden through forests where the trees thus broken lay so thick across one another that it was almost impossible to ride through the district; and it is in situations such as these that attacking the elephant is attended with most danger. During the night they will feed in open plains and thinly wooded districts; but as day dawns, they retire to the densest covers within reach, which nine times in ten are composed of the impracticable wait-a-bit thorns; and here they remain drawn up in a compact herd during the heat of the day. In remote districts, however, and in cool weather, I have known herds to continue pasturing throughout the whole day.

The appearance of the wild elephant is inconceivably majestic and imposing. His gigantic height and colossal bulk, so greatly surpassing all other quadrupeds, combined with his sagacious disposition and peculiar habits, impart to him an interest in the eyes of the hunter which no other animal can call forth. The pace of the elephant when undisturbed is a bold, free, sweeping step; and from the peculiar spongy formation of his foot, his tread is extremely light and inaudible, and all his movements

are attended with a peculiar gentleness and grace. This, however, only applies to the elephant when roaming undisturbed in his jungle ; for when roused by the hunter, he proves the most dangerous enemy, and far more difficult to conquer than any other beast of chase.

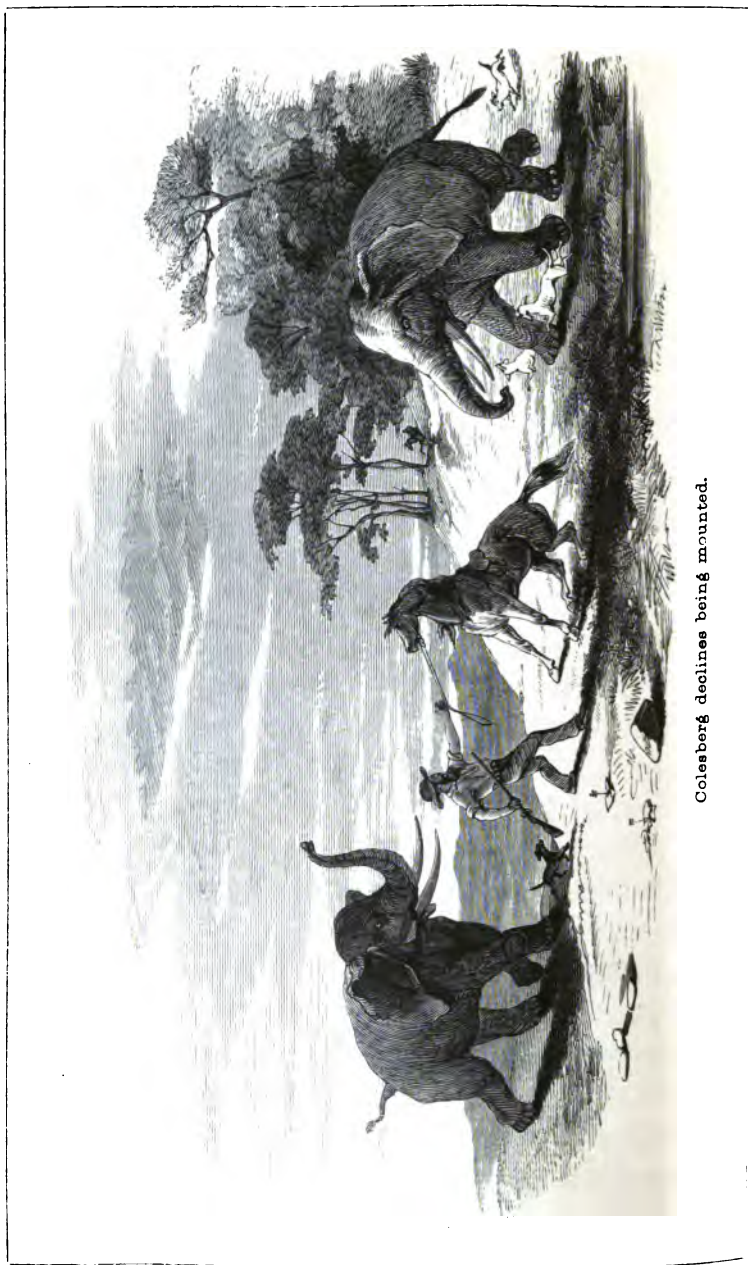
On the 27th, as day dawned, I left my shooting-hole, and proceeded to inspect the spoor of my wounded elephant. After following it for some distance I came to an abrupt hillock, and, fancying that from the summit a good view might be obtained of the surrounding country, I left my followers to seek the spoor, while I ascended. I did not raise my eyes from the ground until I had reached the highest pinnacle of rock. I then looked east, and to my inexpressible gratification I beheld a troop of nine or ten elephants quietly browsing within a quarter of a mile of me. I allowed myself only one glance at them, and then rushed down to warn my followers to be silent. A council-of-war was hastily held, the result of which was my ordering Isaac to ride hard to camp, with instructions to return as quickly as possible, accompanied by Kleinboy, and to bring me my dogs, the large Dutch rifle, and a fresh horse. I once more ascended the hillock to feast my eyes upon the enchanting sight before me ; and, drawing out my spyglass, I narrowly watched the motions of the elephants. The herd consisted entirely of females, several of which were followed by small calves.

Presently, on reconnoitring the surrounding country, I discovered a second herd, consisting of five bull elephants, which were quietly feeding about a mile to the northward. The cows were feeding towards a rocky ridge that stretched away from the base of the hillock on which I stood. Burning with impatience to commence the attack, I resolved to try the stalking-system with these, and to hunt the troop of bulls with dogs and horses. Having thus decided, I directed the guides to watch the elephants from the summit of the hillock, and with a beating heart I approached them. The ground and wind favouring me, I soon gained the rocky ridge towards which they were feeding. They were now within one hundred yards, and I resolved to enjoy the pleasure of watching their movements for a little before I fired. They continued to feed slowly towards me, breaking the branches from the trees with their trunks, and eating the leaves and tender shoots. I soon selected the finest in the herd, and kept my eye on her in particular. At length two of the troop had walked slowly past at about sixty yards, and the one which I had selected was feeding with two others on a thorny tree before me.

My hand was now as steady as the rock on which it rested, so, taking a deliberate aim, I let fly at her head a little behind the eye. She got it hard and sharp, just where I aimed, but it did not seem to affect her much. Uttering a loud cry, she wheeled about, when I gave her

the second ball, close behind the shoulder. All the elephants uttered a strange rumbling noise, and made off in a line to the northward at a brisk ambling pace, their huge fanlike ears flapping in the ratio of their speed. I did not wait to load, but ran back to the hillock to obtain a view. On gaining its summit the guides pointed out the elephants; they were standing in a grove of shady trees, but the wounded one was some distance behind with another elephant, doubtless its particular friend, who was endeavouring to assist it. These elephants had probably never before heard the report of a gun; and, having neither seen nor smelt me, they were unaware of the presence of man, and did not seem inclined to go any farther. Presently my men hove in sight, bringing the dogs; and when these came up I waited some time before commencing the attack, that the dogs and horses might recover their wind. We then rode slowly towards the elephants, and had advanced within two hundred yards of them when, the ground being open, they observed us, and made off in an easterly direction; but the wounded one immediately dropped astern, and next moment she was surrounded by the dogs, which, barking angrily, seemed to engross her attention.

Having placed myself between her and the retreating troop, I dismounted to fire within forty yards of her, in open ground. Colesberg was extremely afraid of the elephants, and gave me much trouble, jerking my arm



Colesberg declines being mounted.

when I tried to fire. At length I let fly; but, on endeavouring to regain my saddle, Colesberg declined to allow me to mount; and when I tried to lead him, and run for it, he only backed towards the wounded elephant. At this moment I heard another elephant close behind; and on looking about I beheld the "friend," with uplifted trunk, charging down upon me at top speed, shrilly trumpeting and following an old black pointer named Schwart, that was perfectly deaf, and trotted along before the enraged elephant quite unaware of what was behind him. I felt certain that she would have either me or my horse. I however determined not to relinquish my steed, but to hold on by the bridle. My men, who of course kept at a safe distance, stood aghast with their mouths open, and for a few seconds my position was certainly not an enviable one. Fortunately, however, the dogs took off the attention of the elephants; and just as they were upon me I managed to spring into the saddle, where I was safe. As I turned my back to mount, the elephants were so very near that I really expected to feel one of their trunks lay hold of me. I rode up to Kleinboy for my double-barrelled two-grooved rifle: he and Isaac were pale and almost speechless with fright. Returning to the charge, I was soon once more alongside, and, firing from the saddle, I sent another brace of bullets into the wounded elephant. Colesberg was extremely unsteady, and destroyed the correctness of my aim.

The friend now seemed resolved to do some mischief, and charged me furiously, pursuing me to a distance of several hundred yards. I therefore deemed it proper to give her a gentle hint to act less officiously, and accordingly, having loaded, I approached within thirty yards, and gave it her sharp, right and left, behind the shoulder, upon which she at once made off with drooping trunk, evidently with a mortal wound. I never recur to this my first day's elephant-shooting without regretting my folly in contenting myself with securing only one elephant. The first was now dying, and could not leave the ground, and the second was also mortally wounded, and I had only to follow and finish her; but I foolishly allowed her to escape, while I amused myself with the first, which kept walking backwards, and standing by every tree she passed. Two more shots finished her: on receiving them she tossed her trunk up and down two or three times, and, falling on her broadside against a thorny tree, which yielded like grass before her enormous weight, she uttered a deep hoarse cry and expired. This was a very handsome old cow elephant, and was decidedly the best in the troop. She was in excellent condition, and carried a pair of long and perfect tusks. I was in high spirits at my success, and felt so perfectly satisfied with having killed one, that, although it was still early in the day, and my horses were fresh, I allowed the troop of five bulls to remain unmolested, foolishly trusting to fall in

with them next day. How little did I then know of the habits of elephants, or the rules to be adopted in hunting them, or deem it probable I should never see them more!

Having knee-haltered our horses, we set to work with our knives and assagais to prepare the skull for the hatchet, in order to cut out the tusks, nearly half the length of which, I may mention, is embedded in bone sockets in the fore part of the skull. To cut out the tusks of a cow elephant requires barely one-fifth of the labour requisite to cut out those of a bull; and when the sun went down we had managed by our combined efforts to cut out one of the tusks of my first elephant, with which we triumphantly returned to camp, having left the guides in charge of the carcase, where they volunteered to take up their quarters for the night. On reaching my waggons I found Johannus and Carollus in a happy state of indifference to all passing events: they were both very drunk, having broken into my wine-cask and spirit-case.

On the 28th I arose at an early hour, and, burning with anxiety to look forth once more from the summit of the hillock which the day before brought me such luck, I made a hasty breakfast, and rode thither with after-riders and my dogs. But, alas! I had allowed the golden opportunity to slip. This day I sought in vain; and although I often again ascended to the summit of my favourite

hillock on that and on the succeeding year, my eyes were destined never again to hail from it a troop of elephants.

Early on the following morning I proceeded to inspect the sandy footpaths leading from the fountain, and at once discovered the spoor of two mighty bull elephants that had drunk there during the night. These I followed, but did not succeed in coming up with the objects of my search.

We were now within two days' march of the kraal of the great chief Sicomy, king of the extensive territory of Bamangwato. This chief was reported to be in the possession of large quantities of ivory; and as I had brought a number of muskets and other articles for barter, I was anxious to push on and first get over my trading before resuming elephant-hunting; more especially since it was not improbable that, having once led the way, other adventurers might follow in my track, and perhaps spoil my market. Taking this into consideration, I deemed it proper on the morning of the 30th to march upon the kraal of Sicomy; and accordingly, about ten A.M. we inspanned, and held for the Bamangwato mountains, whose summits we could see peering above the intervening forest in an easterly direction. On our march we passed near to the carcase of the elephant which I had slain three days before. The number of vultures which were here congregated was truly wonderful. My guides had baked a part of the trunk and two of the feet of

the elephant, and these they now brought to the waggons.¹

On the following morning, which was the 1st of July, we inspanned at dawn of day, and late in the afternoon we reached Lesausau, having performed an extremely arduous and fatiguing march. Our route during the greater part of the day lay through dense jungle and thorny thickets, where it was necessary to clear a way with our axes before the waggons could pass. The ground also was in many places extremely rocky, and threatened the destruction of my wheels and axletrees, causing us much labour, it being indispensable to remove the masses of rock to one side. As we neared Lesausau, we entered upon a broad level strath, adorned throughout its length and breadth with a variety of picturesque acacia and other trees, which stood at intervals as if they had been

¹ It was ever to me a source of great pleasure to reflect that, while enriching myself in following my favourite pursuit of elephant-hunting, I was feeding and making happy the starving families of hundreds of the Bechuana and Bakalahari tribes, who invariably followed my waggons, and assisted me in my hunting, in numbers varying from fifty to two hundred at a time. These men were often accompanied by their wives and families, and when an elephant, hippopotamus, or other large animal was slain, all hands repaired to the spot, when every inch of the animal was reduced to biltongue, viz. cut into long narrow strips, and hung in festoons upon poles, and dried in the sun: even the entrails were not left for the vultures and hyænas, and the very bones were chopped to pieces with their hatchets to obtain the marrow, with which they enriched their soup.

planted by the hand of man. On either side, the mountains rose abruptly from the plain, and they now assumed a very bold and striking appearance, their sides and summits consisting of huge masses of rock piled one above another, some of which seemed so balanced upon their exalted and narrow pedestals,

“As if an infant’s touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge.”

A light and feathery fringe of dwarfish trees and varieties of gigantic cacti adorned the sides and upper ridges of these rugged mountains, and, as we proceeded, I observed finely wooded wild ravines stretching away into the bosom of the mountains.

Here we were joined by three of Sicomy’s men, who informed us that they were in daily apprehension of an attack from the Matabili, who they heard were marching against them. In consequence of this, Sicomy and all his tribe had forsaken their kraals, and were now living in wild caves and other secluded retreats in the sides and on the summits of these rocky mountains. They led us round the base of a bold projecting rock, and then up a wild and well-wooded rocky ravine, bearing no traces of men. On raising our eyes, however, we perceived the summits of the rocks covered with women and children, and very soon detached parties of Sicomy’s warriors came pouring in from different directions, to gaze upon the white man,

I being the first that many of them had seen. These men were all armed and ready for action, each bearing an oval shield of ox, buffalo, or camelopard's hide, a battle-axe, and three or four assagais. They wore karosses of jackal's and leopard's skins, which depended gracefully from their shoulders; and many of them sported a round tuft of black ostrich-feathers on their heads, while others had adorned their woolly hair with one or two wavy plumes of white ones. Both men and women wore abundance of the usual ornaments of beads and brass and copper wire.

We were presently met by a messenger from Sicomy, saying that the king was happy we had arrived, and that he would shortly come to see me. We proceeded up the bold and narrow ravine of Lesausau as far as it was practicable, the water being situated at its upper extremity. Soon after we had encamped Sicomy drew nigh, accompanied by a large retinue of his principal men and warriors. He appeared to me to be about thirty years of age, and was of middle stature. His distinguishing feature is a wall-eye, which imparts to his countenance a roguish look that does not belie the cunning and deceitful character of the man. As he came up to the waggons I met and shook hands with him, and invited him to partake of coffee with me. I could see that he was enchanted at my arrival. He talked at a very rapid pace, and assumed an abrupt and

rather dictatorial manner, occasionally turning round and cracking jokes with his councillors and nobility. He was very anxious to ascertain from Isaac the contents of the waggons, and he said that he would buy everything I had brought, and that he would give me a large bull-elephant's tusk for each of my muskets.

This was a fishing remark to hear what I should say ; so I replied that the muskets cost many teeth in my own country, and that I had not stolen them. I had resolved to maintain a firm and independent manner in my dealings with him, treating him at the same time with the utmost affability. I told him that other men feared to come so far to trade with him, but that his friend Dr. Livingstone had directed me to come, and had sent him a present by me. I then gave him Dr. Livingstone's present, with a similar one from myself, consisting of beads, snuff, and ammunition. It amused me to observe the timid and cringing demeanour of the men of Booby when seated in the presence of the king. Approaching him with the utmost humility, they saluted him by stretching out their hands and clapping the palms together, saying at the same time "*Rumèla, cosi,*" signifying, Hail, king! which his majesty was graciously pleased to acknowledge by squinting at them with his cock-eye, and saying "*Eh,*" which is the invariable Bechuana acknowledgment of a salutation. Often, however, when I saluted the natives, they acknowledged my

salutation by saying "Eh! keitumēla, cosi a Machoa;" signifying, "Eh! thank you, king of the white men." Having saluted the king, the Booby men at once proceeded to expatiate upon the difficulty they had had in prevailing upon the great white man to visit his dominions, and the meritorious manner in which they had conducted me thither; for which the king expressed his gratitude, and ordered "boyalwa," or native beer, to be placed before them. Sicomy remained long at the waggons, engaged in deep and constant conversation with my interpreter and several of his elder councillors, and at a late hour he departed, promising to visit us early on the following day. Fearing that any of his people might come and trade with me during his absence, the king instructed his uncle Mutchuisho, with a retinue, to remain beside the waggons during the night.

At an early hour on the following morning the king made his appearance, attended by a number of his warriors, all carrying their battle-gear. I was still in bed, and seeing the king peeping into my waggon I pretended to be asleep. Presently I observed a savage coming up the glen bearing on his shoulders a bull-elephant's tooth, which he laid under the waggon. Coffee was now announced, so I arose, and the king breakfasted with me. I had resolved to say as little as possible about the trading, and to appear very indifferent, a system indispensable in trading with the natives, which

at all times progresses slowly, but much more so if the trader allows them to imagine that he is very anxious to obtain possession of their goods.¹

While Sicomy was taking his coffee, he told me that he had despatched men to bring elephants' teeth, which he said were at a distance, and that he would purchase everything as quickly as possible, that I might be enabled to leave the country before the Matabili should come. This rumour about the Matabili I at the time suspected to be a fabrication, but I subsequently ascertained that it was a fact.

In the forenoon I occupied myself in writing the journal in my waggon, and I could see that the king was annoyed at my indifference about the trading. At length he asked me to come out of the waggon, saying that he

¹ In trading with the Bechuanas the most difficult point is agreeing about the price of any article in the first instance; and often when trading has once commenced, and the natives are satisfied with the price, exchanges are effected rapidly. It is generally necessary for the trader to ask a little more than he expects to get, that he may appear to yield to their importunity, otherwise they would not deal with him. They never conclude a bargain in a hurry, and always deem it necessary to ask the advice of nearly every one present before they can make up their minds; and if it should happen that any one individual present disapprove of the bargain, the exchange is for the time at an end.

I have more than once been prevented from effecting a sale, which I had all but concluded, by some old wife, who happened to be passing at the moment, exclaiming that I was too high in my prices, although she was perfectly ignorant of our transaction.

had got a present for me, and he brought forward the elephant's tusk which lay beneath the waggon. Having thanked him, I expressed myself satisfied with his present; and in return I immediately presented him with what he reckoned an equivalent in beads. He asked me the price of my muskets, and I answered four large bull's teeth for each. He then retired to an adjacent grove of shady trees, where he sat consulting with his men for hours. Two men at length appeared, coming from opposite directions, each bearing a bull's tooth. When these arrived, Sicomy ordered them to be placed before me, and, calling Isaac, he inflicted on me a long harangue, talking all manner of nonsense, and endeavouring to obtain a musket for these two teeth. At length a third tusk was brought, but it was a small one. It was now late in the afternoon, so I told the king that I was going to take a walk in the mountains to obtain a view of his country. He said that he was going to buy one of the muskets immediately, and requested that I would not leave the waggons. After sitting talking with his men till it was near sunset, he once more offered me two tusks for a gun. I replied that I had already spoken. He then said he was going home, and that he did not know if he would come again to trade with me. If the king had indeed resolved not to trade with me, no request on my part would have altered the case. So I replied that I had never asked him to pur-

chase anything, and was perfectly indifferent whether he did or not ; that there were other chiefs who were anxious to purchase my goods ; and that my reason for visiting his territory was to enjoy the sport of elephant-hunting. Having thus spoken, I wished him good evening, and, shouldering my rifle, I stalked up the rocky ravine and shot two baboons.

At an early hour on the following morning Sicomy was at the waggons ; and having breakfasted, he commenced as on the previous day to endeavour to purchase a gun with two tusks. At length I said that he should have one for three tusks, provided they were large. After a protracted discussion, the third tusk was produced, when I handed him a musket. He next bothered for a bullet-mould, which I also gave him into the bargain. Having obtained the mould, he insisted on having a lead-ladle. That I said I could not give him with one gun ; but promised if he dealt liberally with me he should have one. He continued his importunity about the ladle till late in the afternoon, when he began to talk about buying a second gun. Three tusks were brought, and we had nearly concluded a bargain, when some of his councillors told him that he ought to have received powder and bullets along with the first gun. He commenced to pester me on this subject ; but I stoutly resisted, and told him the bargain was concluded. He, however, continued to harp on this string till a late hour,

when I told him, as I had done the preceding day, that I must now take a walk; and I remarked that, if he thought he had given too much for my gun, he had better return it, and take away his tusks. Having consulted a short time with his wise men, he returned the gun, and resumed possession of his tusks. I then shouldered my rifle, and held for the wells, to give the dogs water.

These wells were situated at a great distance from my camp, and yielded a very moderate supply of water. Here I met with large parties of the Bamangwato women drawing water, which they bore in earthen vessels balanced on their heads to their elevated retreats in the mountains. The pits where my oxen drank were very distant from the camp, and were reported not to yield a sufficient supply of water, the consequence of which was that my horses and oxen had already greatly fallen off in condition. In this state of things I resolved that my stay at Bamangwato should not exceed another day, and I determined if possible to come to terms with Sicomy on the following morning. On returning to the waggons, Carollus came up to me and reported half the oxen missing. This threw me into a state of great alarm. I at once suspected treachery, and I well knew that if Sicomy had taken them they would not easily be recovered. I instantly despatched two mounted men in different directions, with instructions to ride hard and

seek the spoor, and these returned at a late hour, having found them.

On reviewing my trading I could not help feeling annoyed at the dilatory mode in which it progressed. I had now spent two entire days endeavouring to trade, yet no exchanges had been effected. For this, however, there was no help. I could not have acted otherwise, and on the following day I reaped the benefit of my unyielding resolution.

Although I voted the trading an intense bore, it was nevertheless well worth a little time and inconvenience, on account of the enormous profit I should realise. The price I had paid for the muskets was 16*l.* for each case containing twenty muskets; and the value of the ivory I required for each musket was upwards of 30*l.*, being about 3000 per cent., which I am informed is reckoned among mercantile men to be a very fair profit. Sicomy was in those days in the possession of very large quantities of splendid ivory, and still considerable quantities pass annually through his hands. Since I first visited Bamangwato, and taught the natives the use of fire-arms, they have learnt to kill the elephant themselves; but previous to my arrival they were utterly incapable of subduing a full-grown elephant, even by the united exertions of the whole tribe. All the ivory which Sicomy then possessed, and the majority of that which still passes through his hands, is obtained from elephants slain with

assagais by an active and daring race of Bushmen inhabiting very remote regions to the northward and north-west of Bamangwato.

The manner in which Sicomy obtained this ivory was by sending a party of his warriors to the Bushman, who first obtained the tusks in barter for a few beads, and then compelled some of the poor Bakalahari, or wild natives of the desert, over whom Sicomy conceives that he has a perfect right to tyrannize, to bear them on their shoulders across extensive deserts of burning sand to his head-quarters at Bamangwato. So great was the fatigue endured by the poor Bakalahari on these occasions, that many of them died of exhaustion before reaching Bamangwato. At an early hour on the 4th, Sicomy not appearing, I proceeded to visit him at his mountain residence, accompanied by Isaac and a party of his own men. We wound along the base of the mountains for a distance of half a mile, and then commenced ascending the almost perpendicular and rugged mountain side, consisting of immense masses of rock heaped together in dire confusion. Having gained the summit, which was of a tabular character, we advanced a short distance through a succession of heaps of disjointed masses of rock, and presently we reached the chief's temporary retreat; which consisted of a small circular hut, composed of a framework of boughs of trees, interlined with twigs and covered with grass. A number of similar huts were erected around the royal

dwelling, on areas which his men had cleared among the rocks. This, however, was the abode of only a very small part of his tribe, which was extensively scattered over different parts of the mountain range, and occupied sundry distant cattle outposts.

I found Sicomy seated before his wigwam, in earnest conversation with his councillors. He seemed pleased to see me, and thanked me for my visit. I shook hands with him, and informed him that, owing to the scarcity of water at Lesausau, I could not prolong my visit to him; and that I had come to take my leave, and had brought him a few presents, which I then laid before him. He thanked me, and said that I was very good, and that he was happy that I had visited his country; but that one thing made his heart sore, viz. that we had not been able to trade. I replied that that was his fault, and not mine, having offered him my goods on equally liberal terms as I did to others. I then expressed myself anxious to depart. Hereupon Sicomy requested me to remain with him another day, promising to bring me abundance of tusks, and to purchase all my muskets. To this I replied that I was still willing to deal with him, if he would only deal fairly; but I gave him to understand that this was positively the last day I could remain with him. We then all started for the waggons, where this day the barter went on as briskly as it had been dilatory on the two preceding ones. The king continued drinking

coffee and taking snuff at a tremendous rate, and large bowls of his boyalwa kept continually arriving, and were freely circulated throughout the day. Sicomy gave me three bull's tusks for each of the first two muskets, I giving him some powder and lead to boot; after which the price fell to two tusks for each musket. With this rate of exchange the whole assembly seemed perfectly satisfied, and the trading went on without a murmur. Athletic savages were constantly coming and going throughout the day in three different directions, bearing on their shoulders the precious spoils of the elephants of the Kalahari; and when the sun went down all my muskets were disposed of, and I found myself in the possession of a very valuable lot of ivory.

I also effected several exchanges of beads and ammunition for the tusks of cow elephants. I had resolved to purchase fine specimens of the native costume and arms, &c.; but ivory being the most important article, it was best to defer all minor transactions until our trade in it was concluded. The king seemed highly delighted with his purchases, and insisted on discharging each of the muskets as he bought it. It was amusing to see the manner in which he performed this operation. Throwing back his kaross, and applying the stock to his naked shoulder, he shut his good eye, and kept the wall-eye open, to the intense amusement of the Hottentots, who were his instructors on the occasion. Each report caused

the utmost excitement and merriment among the warriors, who pressed forward and requested that they also might be permitted to try their skill with these novel implements of war.

The king had in his possession a most wonderful knob-kerry, which I was determined to obtain. It was made of the horn of the kobaoba, a very rare species of the rhinoceros, and its chief interest consisted in its extraordinary length, which greatly exceeded anything I had ever seen of the kind before, or have since met with. Handing Sicomy my snuff-box, I pointed to the kerry, and asked him where the kobaoba had been killed. He replied that that kerry had been sent him by a chief who resided at an amazing distance on the borders of the Lake of Boats. I then asked him to present it to me, that I might have something to keep in remembrance of him; but he replied that it belonged to his wife, and he could not part with it. Presently, however, while sipping his coffee, he said that if I chose I might purchase it. I asked him what he required for it, and he answered, the cup which he then held full of gunpowder. Accordingly, when his majesty had drained the cup, I handed him the powder, and became possessor of the kobaoba kerry, which is now in my possession, and on which I place a very great value. It was now night, and the king said that he would sleep by the waggon, as it was too late to go home. A number of his men pre-

pared for the bivouac, some collecting logs for the nocturnal watch-fire, which the Bechuanas invariably keep up, while others were occupied in forming circular hedges of thorny branches around the fires, within which they carefully levelled the ground with pointed sticks, preparatory to spreading out their couches, which consist of long dried grass, and extend in a circular form around the fire. On these couches the Bechuanas sleep, with the soles of their feet to the fire, with no other covering than a light kaross. They lie huddled together like silver spoons on a tray, and the number of individuals around each fire is usually about a dozen. Before retiring to rest I informed Sicomy that I should march on the morrow as soon as my oxen had drunk, and I expressed my wish to trade with his people for karosses and armour at an early hour. Sicomy promised that these articles should be forthcoming, and at once informed his people of my wish.

At an early hour on the morning of the 5th I commenced to trade with Sicomy's men for karosses and Bechuana arms, of each of which I obtained some very fine specimens. With these, as with the ivory, there was considerable discussion before the prices could be agreed on in the first instance, after which exchanges were effected rapidly. I had, however, to pay them long prices for their "chakas" or battle-axes, on which all the Bechuana tribes place a very great value.

I had intended to penetrate beyond Bamangwato, with a wish to explore the country, and for the purpose of hunting elephants ; but owing to gross misrepresentations made to me by Isaac relative to Sicomy's wishes on the subject, and partly owing to the threatened attack from the Matabili, I resolved for the present not to extend my peregrinations beyond Bamangwato, but to occupy my time for the remainder of that season in hunting throughout the fine country between Bamangwato and Sichely's mountains. As Isaac's character, however, gradually unfolded itself to me, and as I became more intimate and conversant with the natives, I discovered that he had interpreted Sicomy's wishes to me in utterly false colours ; and I afterwards ascertained from the natives, whose language I very soon began to understand, that Sicomy and his people were not only willing, but anxious, that I should remain and hunt elephants in their territory. In consequence of this, as the reader will shortly learn, being informed by Sicomy's men that the invasion by the Matabili was no longer apprehended, I returned to Bamangwato, and penetrated into the extensive forests to the northward and eastward of that mountain range, where for several months I continued hunting elephants, accompanied by large parties of Sicomy's men.

CHAPTER XV.

Take leave of Sicomy — Digging for Water — The Elephants' Fountain again — A wounded Roan Antelope bays in the Water, and kills my Dogs right and left — Sicomy's Camp again — We march through a beautiful Valley — Curious Instinct of the Rhinoceros-bird — A mighty Bull Elephant shot after a hard Conflict — Mutchuisho's Attentions more charitable than pleasant — Cutting up an Elephant — A strange Scene — Baking the Flesh — Primitive Tobacco-pipes — Biltongue Festoons.

ABOUT eleven o'clock A.M. on the 5th of July, everything being ready, I took leave of Sicomy and retraced my steps for Corriebely. It caused me much pain and anxiety to observe that my cattle were extremely hollow-looking and spiritless from want of water: not one of them having obtained a sufficiency of that essential of life since they had last drunk at Corriebely, and several appearing so distressed that I entertained considerable fears of their being able to reach that fountain. I was accompanied by a small party of Sicomy's men, who followed me in the hope of obtaining flesh. Having proceeded about a mile, I missed my greyhound "Flam," which had been doubtless stolen by Sicomy's orders, he being notorious for his predilection for that variety of dog. I therefore at once despatched a messenger to the

king, to say that I required him to find my dog; and shortly after this men overtook me, bearing a kaross, which they said the king had sent to purchase one of my dogs. I replied that they had already taken the dog, but that I would not have the kaross. They then departed, and I continued my march. After trekking about six miles we reached a deep gravel-hole beside a mass of red granite rock, at the bottom of which there was about a bucketful of spring water; and here was the fresh spoor of a huge bull elephant, which had scooped out large portions of the gravel with his trunk on the preceding evening, but on turning about he had entirely undone what he had accomplished by trampling it down again into the well with his huge feet.

On inspecting the spot I fancied that by digging we might obtain a little water for the unfortunate cattle, which at this moment was an object of the utmost importance, the fountain of Corriebely being still very distant. I accordingly set to work hard with all my followers, assisted by the Bechuanas; and having removed an immense quantity of the gravel, I had the satisfaction to discover a small spring of excellent water, which issued from beneath the granite rock and ran as fast as we could catch it in our pails. I then placed my large flesh-pot near the pit, and, ordering the men to bring up the cattle in small detachments, we baled out the water as fast as they could drink it, the buckets being handed

along by a line of men extending up the gravel bank to the cattle: and thus in a short time every one of them obtained a sufficiency. This opportune supply of water was to me invaluable, my poor dogs having also been much distressed and requiring water no less than the cattle.

With renewed spirits we continued our journey, and at sundown we halted about half-way to Corriebely. On the march two of the oxen evinced distress, and we were obliged to outspan them and allow them to follow slowly with the loose cattle. About ten o'clock on the following morning I reached Corriebely, and was most thankful to have succeeded in bringing all my wretched cattle alive to a fountain where they could drink their fill. While breakfasting, three of Sicomy's men approached, leading my greyhound Flam; they said that they were sent by Sicomy, who, on hearing that she was missing, had at once issued orders for her recovery.

In the afternoon we inspanned, and marched to the scene of the fall of my first elephant, where we halted for the night. On reaching Massouey I commenced examining the elephants' footpaths on the side on which were my strongest hopes. I had almost made the circuit of the fountain, and hope had died within me, when, lo! broad and long, and fresh as fresh could be, the enormous spoor of two mighty bull elephants which had drunk there during the night. This was glorious! I had great

faith in the spooring powers of the Bamangwato men, and I felt certain that at length the day had arrived on which I was to kill my first bull elephant. The Bechuanas at once took up the spoor, and went ahead in a masterly manner; and with buoyant spirits I followed in their steps. The spoor led about due west, a direction in which I had not yet been. Having followed it for many miles through this desert country, we reached a district where the bushes, to whose berries Knop-kop was so partial, grew in great abundance; and here the elephants had commenced to feed upon their roots, ploughing up the sand extensively with their tusks. We now entered upon ground much frequented by elephants, their traces, of various dates, extending on all sides, crossing and recrossing one another in every direction: and by this means we eventually lost the spoor. After a fruitless search of several hours, and many vain endeavours to retrieve the day by trying back on the spoor and making wide casts to the right and left, I was completely beaten, and compelled to drop it, the Bechuanas sitting down and sulkily refusing to proceed farther. We now bent our steps homeward. We had not ridden many miles when we observed a herd of fifteen camelopards browsing quietly in an open glade of the forest. After a very severe chase, in the course of which they stretched out into a magnificent widely-extended front, keeping their line with a regularity worthy of a troop of dragoons,

I succeeded in separating a fine bull, upwards of eighteen feet in height, from the rest of the herd, and brought him to the ground within a short distance of the camp. The Bechuanas expressed themselves delighted at my success. They kindled a fire and slept beside the carcase, which they very soon reduced to biltongue and marrow-bones.

On the morning of the 8th I walked to the fountain, and examined all the elephants' footpaths, but there was no fresh spoor. Having breakfasted, I rode for a conical hill, distant from the waggons about five miles in a northerly direction, from whose summit I fancied that elephants might be seen. It was a charming cool day, with a fine bracing wind, the sky beautifully overcast with clouds. I rode along, holding the elephants' footpaths. The marks of their strength were visible in every grove, and all the large trees in the vicinity of the muddy vlees, which at this season were dry, were plastered with sun-baked mud to a height of twelve feet from the ground. On reaching the base of the conical hill I secured my horse to a tree, and ascended to its summit, from which I carefully examined the distant forest landscape with my spyglass, but sought in vain for elephants.

In the evening I took my heavy single-barrelled rifle, and sauntered towards the fountain. A large herd of blue wildebeests were slowly advancing up the vley to drink. I accordingly took up a position behind a low bush near which they must pass, and lay flat on the ground, waiting

their approach. Presently I raised my head to see how they were coming on, when I perceived a pair of the rare and beautiful roan antelope or bastard gemsbok warily approaching the fountain. These came up, and were passing within a hundred and twenty yards of me, when, selecting the buck, I let fly, and missed. The whole herd of wildebeests now wheeled to the right-about, and thundered down the vley, enveloped in a cloud of dust; but the two roan antelopes, which had probably never before heard the report of a gun, stood looking about them, while I hastily loaded, lying flat on my side. This being accomplished, I again let fly, and the old buck dropped to the shot; the ball had entered his shoulder, and he lay kicking and roaring until I had almost reloaded, when he regained his feet and made off after his comrade. At this moment "Argyll" and "Bonteborg," two right good dogs, came up, having heard the shots, and, perceiving the bastard gemsboks, they gave chase. To my surprise the wounded buck, instead of turning to bay, now set off at a rapid pace. He had not gone far, however, when he turned, and stood at bay for about a minute. Two or three more of the dogs heard their comrades barking, and came up to the buck, which then broke bay and made off through the bushes, and in another moment all was still. It was now almost dark, and I followed in the direction which the buck had held, when suddenly I heard a rushing noise, and in

another instant the wounded buck met me face to face, closely pursued by five of the dogs. He was making for the water, where he would have bayed, but I unluckily turned him. Owing to light rain which was falling at the moment, I had unfortunately slipped my rifle into a water-proof holster, which prevented my firing, and the buck held close past the waggons, where more dogs joined in the chase.

On reaching camp I inquired of the men if they had seen the buck, and they answered Yes, but that he was not wounded. This I fancied must be the case, and that the dogs had followed the fresh buck; and as two of them made their appearance, I thought that the affair was at an end. In the mean time, however, Kleinboy had seen the chase, and, hastily bridling a horse, had followed. He now rode breathless to the waggons, and reported that the buck was at bay beyond a low ridge within half a mile of camp, and that he was killing the dogs right and left. Seizing my rifle, I mounted a horse and followed after Kleinboy in the dark. Presently I heard the music of my pack, and on coming up I found the bastard gemsbok lying beside a bush, with the dogs barking round him. Three dogs that had followed me from camp, on seeing the buck lying, rushed in upon him, when he struck furiously right and left, and killed one dead on the spot, severely wounding another behind the shoulder; these were

Vitfoot and Argyll, two of my best dogs. Again he struck right and left, and knocked over Wolf and Flam with amazing violence, severely injuring their stomachs. He had killed Bles, my stoutest and fiercest dog, before I came up, the horn having entered his heart. It was a long time before I could fire, for the night was dark, and the buck lay on the ground, with the surviving dogs still pressing close around him. At length he stood up, when I shot him dead with a single shot. He proved to be the wounded buck, having received my first shot in the shoulder. This was a first-rate specimen of the roan antelope, and carried a pair of superb scimitar-shaped horns, which were long and fairly set, and beautifully knotted. Before leaving Massouey two more noble giraffes fell before my rifle, also several fat elands and other varieties of game.

After remaining in the neighbourhood of the fountain for several days, and finding that it was entirely deserted by the elephants, I determined to retrace my steps and seek for them beyond Bamangwato, and on the 18th we again came to the camp of Sicomy upon the Rocky Mountains. I found the king in a kraal which I had not hitherto visited. He was seated beneath a low shady tree, with a few friends and some of his wives. A number of splendid koodoos' skulls and horns lay rotting about the kraal, among which were several pairs exceeding any I had yet beheld. Casting my eyes to the south-

east, I obtained a very distant view of the country in that direction. From the base of the mountain on which I stood stretched a dead level park through a bold opening in the mountains. This park was regularly ornamented with groves and forest-trees, and extended without the slightest break or change as far as I could see. The scene exactly resembled the ocean when viewed from the summit of some bold mountain standing near its shore. Having partaken of the king's beer, I descended to my waggons, when we continued our march along the aforesaid valley. I was accompanied by Sicomy's brother; and on looking behind me as we proceeded, I beheld long strings of the natives following in our wake, and small detached parties kept pouring down from the rocks and glens on every side, until my suite exceeded two hundred men.

We held a northerly course, and on the second day we reached Letlochee, a strong perpetual fountain, situated in an abrupt and rocky ravine. This ravine lay in a range of low rocky hills, which were bounded on the north and west by a wide and gently sloping basin or hollow, diversified with extensive groves and open glades. This hollow extended to a breadth of from six to eight miles, and was much frequented by elands and giraffes, and beyond it stretched the boundless extent of the sandy Kalahari desert. Here I daily enjoyed excellent sport with these two varieties of game; but though elephants

occasionally visited the water, and we followed on their tracks to an amazing distance, we always failed to obtain a view of them.

On the forenoon of the 23rd a native came and informed me that he had discovered a white rhinoceros lying asleep in thick cover to the south. I accordingly accompanied him to the spot and commenced stalking in upon the vast muchocho. He was lying asleep beneath a shady tree, and his appearance reminded me of an enormous hog, which in shape he slightly resembles. He kept constantly flapping his ears, which they invariably do when sleeping. Before I could reach the proper distance to fire, several "rhinoceros-birds," by which he was attended, warned him of his impending danger by sticking their bills into his ear, and uttering their harsh, grating cry. Thus aroused, he suddenly sprang to his feet and crashed away through the jungle at a rapid trot, and I saw no more of him.¹

¹ These rhinoceros-birds are constant attendants upon the hippopotamus and the four varieties of rhinoceros, their object being to feed upon the ticks and other parasitic insects that swarm upon these animals. They are of a greyish colour, and are nearly as large as a common thrush; their voice is very similar to that of the mistletoe-thrush. Many a time have these ever-watchful birds disappointed me in my stalk, and tempted me to invoke an anathema upon their devoted heads. They are the best friends the rhinoceros has, and rarely fail to awaken him even in his soundest nap. "Chukuroo" perfectly understands their warning, and, springing to his feet, he generally first looks about him in every direction, after

In the evening one of the parties sent out to seek for the spoor of elephants returned to camp, stating that a small tribe of Bakalahari, who resided in a range of mountains to the east, reported these beasts to frequent the forests in the vicinity of their abode, and Mutchuisho, Sicomy's uncle, who attended me whilst hunting his country, accordingly requested me to hold myself in readiness to accompany him in quest of the elephants at an early hour next day. It was customary with me to console myself, when hope had almost died under a long-continued run of bad luck, by saying to myself that "Patience will have her perfect work," thus making up my mind that a man who is a good stalker and a fair rifle-shot must eventually obtain by perseverance whatever game he seeks

which he invariably makes off. I have often hunted a rhinoceros on horseback, which led me a chase of many miles, and required a number of shots before he fell, during which chase several of these birds remained by the rhinoceros to the last. They reminded me of mariners on the deck of some bark sailing on the ocean, for they perched along his back and sides; and as each of my bullets told on the shoulder of the rhinoceros, they ascended about six feet into the air, uttering their harsh cry of alarm, and then resumed their position. It sometimes happened that the lower branches of trees, under which the rhinoceros passed, swept them from their living deck, but they always recovered their former station; they also adhere to the rhinoceros during the night. I have often shot these animals at midnight when drinking at the fountains, and the birds, imagining they were asleep, remained with them till morning, and on my approaching, before taking flight, they exerted themselves to their utmost to awaken Chukuroo from his deep sleep.

to kill. But in the present instance things looked so bad that I had begun to think it not improbable that I might be compelled to leave the Bamangwato country without again even seeing what my heart so ardently desired, viz. an old bull elephant free in his native forests; and day and night I mourned my folly in losing the opportunity which I had neglected on the 27th day of June.

But Patience *will* have her perfect work, and the day had at last arrived which was to repay my steady perseverance with complete success. At an early hour on the 24th, upon the strength of the report brought to us on the preceding evening, I took the field with Isaac and Kleinboy as after-riders, accompanied by Mutchuisho and a hundred and fifty of his tribe. We held a north-easterly course, and, having proceeded about five miles through the forest, we reached a fountain, where I observed the spoor of a herd of cow elephants, two days old. Here we made a short halt, and snuff was briskly circulated, while the leading men debated on the course we were to follow, and it was agreed that we should hold for the Bakalahari kraal. Having continued our course for several miles, we rounded the northern extremity of a range of rocky mountains which rose abruptly in the forest and stretched away to the south of east in a long-continued chain. Here we were met by men whom Mutchuisho had despatched before daybreak, who said that the Bakalahari women had that morning seen ele-

phants. This was joyous news. My hopes were high, and I at once felt certain that the hour of triumph was at hand. But disappointment was still in store for me. We all sat down on the grass, while men were despatched to bring the Bakalahari, and when these came we ascertained that it was only spoor and not elephants they had seen. We held on for an inspection of it; and here I was further to be disappointed, the spoor proving to be two days old.

The country now before me was a vast level forest, extending to the north and east for about twenty miles without a break. At that distance, however, the landscape was shut in by blue mountain ranges of considerable height, and two bold conical mountains standing close together rose conspicuous above the rest. These mountains the Bamangwato men informed me were their ancient habitation, and that of their forefathers, but the cruel Matabili had driven them from thence to the rocky mountains which they now occupy. We continued our course in an easterly direction, and twice crossed the gravelly bed of a periodical river, in which were several small springs of excellent water. These springs had been exposed by elephants, which had cleared away the gravel with their trunks. Around these springs the spoor of rhinoceros was abundant. After proceeding several miles through a dry and barren tract, where wait-a-bit thorns prevailed, we entered upon more interesting ground.

The forest was adorned with very picturesque old trees of various sorts and sizes, which stood singly and in shady groups, while the main body of the forest consisted of a variety of trees of other sorts, averaging the height of a giraffe. The elephants had left abundant traces of their presence, but all the marks were old. Fresh spoor of giraffe was imprinted on the ground on every side, and we presently saw a large herd of these, standing scattered through the forest to our left. They were glorious fellows, but I was now in pursuit of nobler game: the natives were leading me to some distant fountain, where they expected we should discover spoor.

On we sped through the depths of the forest, our view being confined to about fifty yards on every side. Presently emerging upon a small open glade, I observed a herd of brindled gnooks and two or three troops of pallahs; and soon after a second herd of about fifteen camelopards stood browsing before us, and, getting our wind, dashed away to our left. We had proceeded about two miles farther, and it was now within two hours of sunset, when, lo! a thorny tree, newly smashed by an elephant. Some of the natives attentively examined the leaves of the broken branches to ascertain exactly when he had been there; while some for the same purpose overhauled the spoor. It was the spoor of a first-rate bull; he had fed there that morning at the dawn of day. The ground was hard and bad for spooring, but the natives evinced

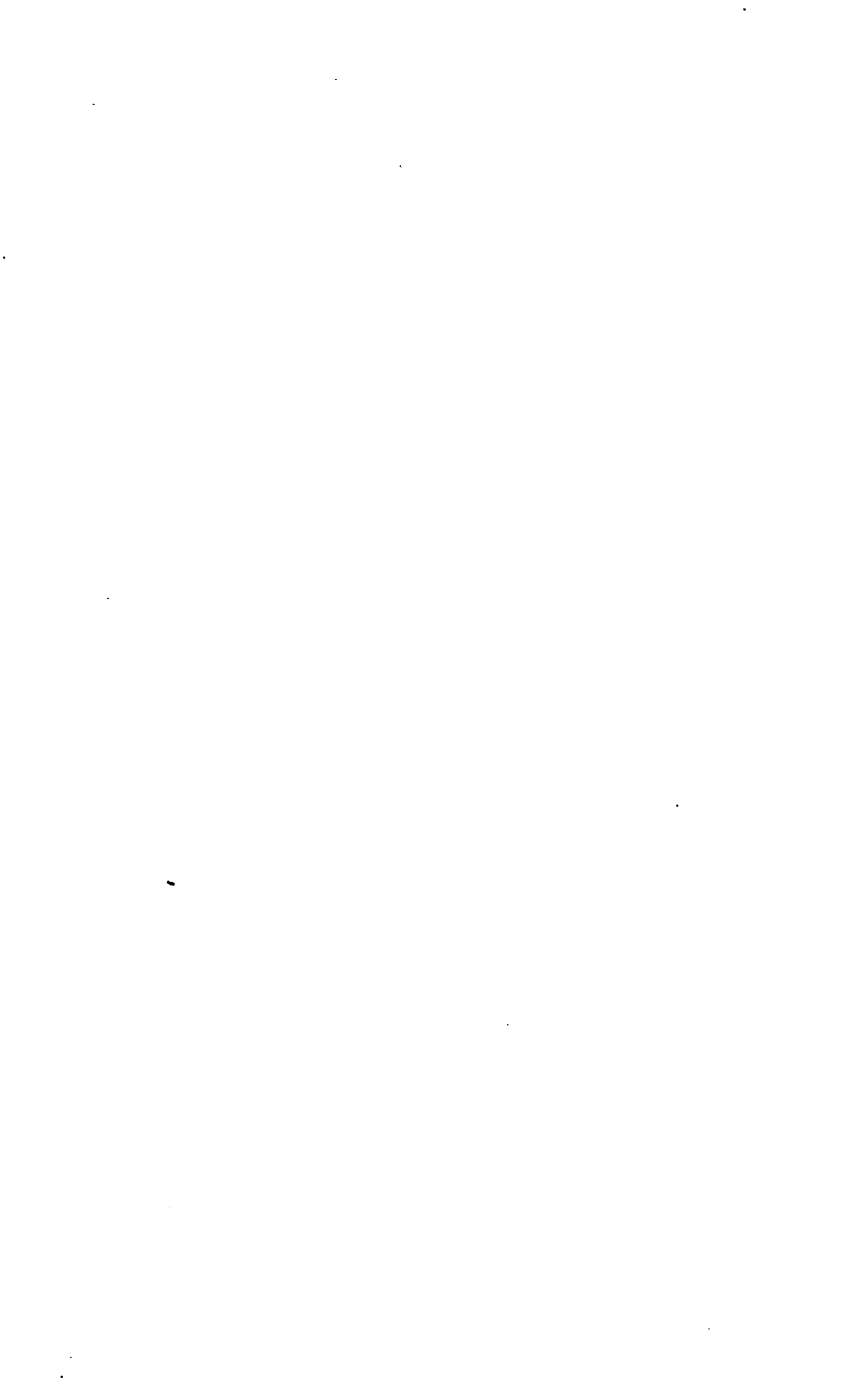
great skill ; and following it for a short distance, we came to ground where a troop of bull elephants had pastured not many hours before. Here the thorny trees on every side were demolished by them, and huge branches and entire trees were rent and uprooted, and lay scattered across our path, having been carried several yards in the trunks of the elephants before they stood to eat the leaves : the ground also was here and there ploughed up by their tusks in quest of roots ; and in these places the enormous fresh spoor—that thrilling sight to a hunter's eye—was beautifully visible.

All this was extremely interesting and gratifying ; but I had been so often disappointed, and it was now so very near sunset, that I entertained but faint hopes of finding them that evening. Mutchuisho was very anxious that I should see the elephants ; he had divested himself of his kaross, and, carrying one of the muskets which Sicomy had bought from me, he led the spooring party, consisting of about fifteen cunning old hands. The great body of the men he had ordered to sit down and remain quiet until the attack commenced. Having followed the spoor for a short distance, old Mutchuisho became extremely excited, and told me that we were close to the elephants. A few minutes after several of the spoorers affirmed that they had heard the elephants break a tree in advance ; they differed, however, about the direction, some saying it was in front, and others that it was away to our left.

Two or three men quickly ascended the tallest trees that stood near us, but they could not see the elephants. Mutchuisho then extended men to the right and left, while we continued on the spoor.

In a few minutes one of those who had gone off to our left came running breathless to say that he had seen the mighty game. I halted for a minute, and instructed Isaac, who carried the big Dutch rifle, to act independently of me, while Kleinboy was to assist me in the chase ; but, as usual, when the row began, my followers thought only of number one. I bared my arms to the shoulder, and, having imbibed a draught of aqua pura from the calabash of one of the spoorers, I grasped my trusty two-grooved rifle, and told my guide to go ahead. We proceeded silently as might be for a few hundred yards, following the guide ; when he suddenly pointed, exclaiming. " Klow ! " and before us stood a herd of mighty bull elephants, packed together beneath a shady grove about a hundred and fifty yards in advance. I rode slowly towards them ; and as soon as they observed me they made a loud rumbling noise, and, tossing their trunks, wheeled right about and made off in one direction, crashing through the forest and leaving a cloud of dust behind them. I was accompanied by a detachment of my dogs, who assisted me in the pursuit.

The distance I had come, and the difficulties I had undergone, to behold these elephants, rose fresh before





Riding out the best Bull Elephant

me. I determined that on this occasion at least I would do my duty, and, dashing my spurs into "Sunday's" ribs, I was very soon much too close in their rear for safety. The elephants now made an inclination to my left, whereby I obtained a good view of the ivory. The herd consisted of six bulls; four of them were full-grown, first-rate elephants; the other two were fine fellows, but had not yet arrived at perfect stature. Of the four old fellows, two had much finer tusks than the rest, and for a few seconds I was undecided which of these two I would follow; when, suddenly, the one which I fancied had the stoutest tusks broke from his comrades, and I at once felt convinced that he was the patriarch of the herd, and followed him accordingly. Cantering alongside, I was about to fire, when he instantly turned, and, uttering a trumpet so strong and shrill that the earth seemed to vibrate beneath my feet, he charged furiously after me for several hundred yards in a direct line, not altering his course in the slightest degree for the trees of the forest, which he snapped and overthrew like reeds in his headlong career.

When he pulled up in his charge, I likewise halted; and as he slowly turned to retreat I let fly at his shoulder, "Sunday" capering and prancing and giving me much trouble. On receiving the ball the elephant shrugged his shoulder, and made off at a free majestic walk. This shot brought several of the dogs to my

assistance which had been following the other elephants, and on their coming up and barking another headlong charge was the result, accompanied by the never-failing trumpet as before. In his charge he passed close to me, when I saluted him with a second bullet in the shoulder, of which he did not take the slightest notice. I now determined not to fire again until I could make a steady shot; but although the elephant turned repeatedly, "Sunday" invariably disappointed me, capering so that it was impossible to fire. At length exasperated, I became reckless of the danger, and, springing from the saddle, I approached the elephant under cover of a tree, and gave him a bullet in the side of the head, when, trumpeting so shrilly that the forest trembled, he charged among the dogs, from whom he seemed to fancy that the blow had come; after which he took up a position in a grove of thorns, with his head towards me. I walked up very near, and as he was in the act of charging, I (being in those days under wrong impressions as to the impracticability of bringing down an elephant with a shot in the forehead) stood coolly in his path until he was within fifteen paces of me, and let drive at the hollow of his forehead, in the vain expectation that by so doing I should end his career. The shot only served to increase his fury—an effect which, I have remarked, shots in the head invariably produce; and continuing his charge with incredible quickness and im-

petuosity, he all but terminated my elephant-hunting for ever. A large party of the Bechuanas who had come up yelled out simultaneously, imagining I was killed, for the elephant was at one moment almost on the top of me : I however escaped by my activity; and by dodging round the bushy trees. As the elephant was charging, an enormous thorn ran deep into the sole of my foot, the old Badenoch brogues, which I that day sported, being worn through; and this caused me severe pain, laming me throughout the rest of the conflict.

The elephant held on through the forest at a sweeping pace; but he was hardly out of sight when I was loaded and in the saddle, and soon once more alongside. About this time I heard Isaac blazing away at another bull; but when the elephant charged, his cowardly heart failed him, and he very soon made his appearance at a safe distance in my rear. My elephant kept crashing along at a steady pace, with blood streaming from his wounds; the dogs, which were knocked up with fatigue and thirst, no longer barked around him, but had dropped astern. It was long before I again fired, for I was afraid to dismount, and "Sunday" was extremely troublesome. At length I fired sharp right and left from the saddle: he got both balls behind the shoulder and made a long charge after me, rumbling and trumpeting as before. The whole body of the Bamangwato men had now come up, and were following a short

distance behind me. Among these was Mollyeon, who volunteered to help; and being a very swift and active fellow, he rendered me important service by holding my fidgety horse's head while I fired and loaded. I then fired six broadsides from the saddle, the elephant charging almost every time, and pursuing us back to the main body in our rear, who fled in all directions as he approached.

The sun had now sunk behind the tops of the trees: it would very soon be dark, and the elephant did not seem much distressed, notwithstanding all he had received. I recollected that my time was short, therefore at once resolved to fire no more from the saddle, but to go close up to him and fire on foot. Riding up to him I dismounted, and, approaching very near, I gave it him right and left in the side of the head, upon which he made a long and determined charge after me; but I was now very reckless of his charges, for I saw that he could not overtake me, and in a twinkling I was loaded, and, again approaching, I fired sharp right and left behind his shoulder. Again he charged with a terrific trumpet, which sent "Sunday" flying through the forest. This was his last charge. The wounds which he had received began to tell on his constitution, and he now stood at bay beside a thorny tree, with the dogs barking around him. These, refreshed by the evening breeze, and perceiving that it was nearly over with the elephant, had once more

come to my assistance. Having loaded, I drew near and fired right and left at his forehead. On receiving these shots, instead of charging he tossed his trunk up and down, and by various sounds and motions, most gratifying to the hungry natives, evinced that his demise was near. Again I loaded, and fired my last shot behind his shoulder: on receiving it, he turned round the bushy tree beside which he stood, and I ran round to give him the other barrel, but the mighty old monarch of the forest needed no more; before I could clear the bushy tree he fell heavily on his side, and his spirit had fled. My feelings at this moment can only be understood by a few brother Nimrods, who have had the good fortune to enjoy a similar encounter. I never felt so gratified on any former occasion as I did then.

By this time all the natives had come up; they were in the highest spirits, and flocked around the elephant laughing and talking at a rapid pace. I climbed on to him, and sat enthroned upon his side, which was as high as my eyes when standing on the ground. In a few minutes night set in, when the natives, having illuminated the jungle with a score of fires, and formed a semicircle of bushes to windward, lay down to rest without partaking of a morsel of food. Mutchuisho would not allow a man to put an assagai into the elephant until the morrow, and placed two relays of sentries to keep watch on either side of him. My dinner consisted of a piece of

flesh from the temple of the elephant, which I broiled on the hot embers. In the conflict I had lost my shirt, which was reduced to streamers by the wait-a-bit thorns, and all the clothing that remained was a pair of buckskin knee-breeches.

The night was very cold, it being now the dead of the African winter. Having collected dry grass, I spread it beside my fire, and lay down for the night with no other covering than an old sheepskin, which I had used for a saddle-cloth. Shortly after I had dropped asleep, Mutchuisho, commiserating my bare condition, spread an old jackal kaross over me. This kaross, as all Bechuana garments are, was thickly tenanted by small transparent insects, usually denominated lice. These virulent creatures, probably finding my skin more tender than that of the owner of the kaross, seemed resolved to enjoy a banquet while they could; and presently I awoke with my whole body so poisoned and inflamed that I felt as if attacked with a severe fever. All further rest that night was at an end. I returned the kaross to Mutchuisho, with grateful acknowledgments for his polite intentions; and piling dry wood on the fire, which emitted a light as bright as day, I aroused the slumbering Kleinboy to assist me in turning my buckskins outside in, when an animating "chasse" commenced, which terminated in the capture of about fourscore of my white-currant coloured visitors. I then lit another fire opposite to the first, and

spent the remainder of the night squatted between the two, thus imbibing caloric before and behind.

As the sun rose on the morning of the 25th, Mut-chuisho gave the word to cut up the elephant, when a scene of blood, noise, and turmoil ensued, which baffles all description. Every native there, divested of his kaross and armed with an assagai, rushed to the onslaught; and in less than two hours every inch of the elephant was gone, and carried by the different parties to their respective temporary locations, which they had chosen beneath each convenient tree that grew around.

The manner in which the elephant is cut up is as follows:—The rough outer skin is first removed, in large sheets, from the side which lies uppermost. Several coats of an under skin are then met with. This skin is of a tough and pliant nature, and is used by the natives for making water-bags, in which they convey supplies of water from the nearest vley or fountain (which is often ten miles distant) to the elephant. They remove this inner skin with caution, taking care not to cut it with the assagai; and it is formed into water-bags by gathering the corners and edges, and transfixing the whole on a pointed wand. The flesh is then removed in enormous sheets from the ribs, when the hatchets come into play, with which they chop through, and remove individually, each colossal rib. The bowels are thus laid bare; and in the removal of these the leading men take a lively in-

terest and active part, for it is throughout and around the bowels that the fat of the elephant is mainly found.

There are few things which a Bechuana prizes so highly as fat of any description ; they will go an amazing distance for a small portion of it. They use it principally in cooking their sun-dried biltongue, and they also eat it with their corn. The fat of the elephant lies in extensive layers and sheets in his inside, and the quantity which is obtained from a full-grown bull, in high condition, is very great. Before it can be obtained, the greater part of the bowels must be removed. To accomplish this, several men eventually enter the immense cavity of his inside, where they continue mining away with their assagais, and handing the fat to their comrades outside until all is bare. While this is transpiring with the sides and bowels, other parties are equally active in removing the skin and flesh from the remaining parts of the carcase. The natives have a horrid practice on these occasions of besmearing their bodies, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, with the black and clotted gore ; and in this anointing they assist one another, each man taking up the fill of both his hands, and spreading it over the back and shoulders of his friend. Throughout the entire proceeding an incessant and deafening clamour of many voices and confused sounds is maintained, and violent jostling and wrestling are practised by every man, elbowing the breasts and countenances of his fellows, all slippery with gore, as he

endeavours to force his way to the venison through the dense intervening ranks, while the sharp and ready assagai gleams in every hand. The augry voices and gory appearances of these naked savages, combined with their excited and frantic gestures and glistening arms, presented an effect so wild and striking, that when I first beheld the scene I contemplated it in the momentary expectation of beholding one half of the gathering turn their weapons against the other.

The trunk and feet are considered a delicacy, and a detachment are employed on these. The four feet are amputated at the fetlock joint, and the trunk, which at the base is about two feet in thickness, is cut into convenient lengths. Trunk and feet are then baked, preparatory to their removal to head-quarters. The manner in which this is done is as follows:—A party, provided with sharp-pointed sticks, dig a hole in the ground for each foot and a portion of the trunk. These holes are about two feet deep, and a yard in width; the excavated earth is embanked around the margin of the hole. This work being completed, they next collect an immense quantity of dry branches and trunks of trees, of which there is always a profusion scattered around, having been broken by the elephants in former years. These they pile above the holes to the height of eight or nine feet, and then set fire to the heap. When these strong fires have burnt down, and the whole of the wood is reduced

to ashes, the holes and the surrounding earth are heated in a high degree. Ten or twelve men then stand round the pit, and rake out the ashes with a pole about sixteen feet in length, having a hook at the end. They relieve one another in quick succession, each man running in and raking the ashes for a few seconds, and then pitching the pole to his comrade and retreating, since the heat is so intense that it is scarcely to be endured. When all the ashes are thus raked out beyond the surrounding bank of earth, each elephant's foot and portion of the trunk is lifted by two athletic men, standing side by side, who place it on their shoulders; and approaching the pit together, they heave it into it. The long pole is now again resumed, and with it they shove in the heated bank of earth upon the foot, shoving and raking until it is completely buried in the earth. The hot embers, of which there is always a great supply, are then raked into a heap above the foot, and another bonfire is kindled over each, which is allowed to burn down and die a natural death; by which time the enormous foot or trunk will be found to be equally baked throughout its inmost parts. When the foot is supposed to be ready, it is taken out of the ground with pointed sticks, and is first well beaten, and then scraped with an assagai, whereby adhering particles of sand are got rid of. The outside is then pared off, and it is transfixed with a sharp stake for facility of carriage.

The feet thus cooked are excellent, as is also the trunk, which very much resembles buffalo's tongue. The reason why such large fires are requisite is owing to the mass of the flesh that must be baked. In raking the sand on the foot, the natives are careful not to rake the red-hot embers in with it, which would burn and destroy the meat; whereas the sand or earth protects it, imparting an even and steady heat. When the natives have cut up the elephant, and removed the large masses of flesh, &c., to their respective temporary kraals around, they sit down for a little to rest and draw their breath, and for a short time smoking and snuffing are indulged in.

The Bechuana pipe is of a very primitive description, differing from any I had ever seen. When they wish to smoke they moisten a spot of earth, not being particular whence they obtain the water. Into this earth they insert a green twig, bent into a semicircle, whose bend is below the said earth, and both ends protruding. They then knead the moist earth down with their knuckles on the twig, which they work backwards and forwards until a hole is established, when the twig is withdrawn, and one end of the aperture is enlarged with the fingers, so as to form a bowl to contain the tobacco. The pipe is thus finished and ready for immediate use, when tobacco and fire are introduced, and the smoker drops on his knees, and, resting on the palms of his hands, he brings his lips in contact with the mud at the small end of the

hole, and thus inhales the grateful fumes. Large volumes of smoke are emitted through the nostrils, while a copious flow of tears from the eyes of the smoker evinces the pleasure he enjoys. One of these pipes will serve a large party, who replenish the bowl and relieve one another in succession.

The natives, having drawn their breath, once more devote their attention to the flesh, which they next reduce to biltongue, cutting every morsel into thin strips from six to twenty feet in length. These strips are of the breadth and thickness of a man's two fingers. When all is reduced to biltongue they sally forth with their tomahawks, and cut down a number of poles of two sorts, for uprights and cross-poles. The uprights are eight feet long, and forked at one end. They place them upright in the ground around their respective trees, laying the cross-poles resting on the forks, and these are adorned with endless garlands of the raw meat, which is permitted to hang in the sun for two or three days, when it will have lost much of its weight, and be stiff and easy to be carried. They then remove the biltongue from the poles, and, folding it together, they form it into bundles, which are strongly lashed and secured with long strips of the tough inner bark of thorny mimosas. Their work in the forest is now completed, and, each man placing one bundle on his head, and slinging several others across his shoulders, returns to his wife and family at head-quarters.

The appearance which the flesh of a single elephant exhibits when reduced to strips and suspended from the poles is truly surprising, the forest far around displaying a succession of ruby festoons, and reminding one of a vineyard laden with its clustering fruits. When the skull of my elephant was ready for the axe, Mutchuisho caused a party to hew out for me the tusks—a work of great labour, and needing considerable skill. In the present instance the work was clumsily executed, the natives hacking and injuring the ivory in removing the bone with their little tomahawks. In consequence of this I invariably afterwards performed the task myself, using superior American hatchets, which I had provided expressly for the purpose. When the tusks had been extracted I saddled up, and started for the camp, accompanied by my after-riders and a party of the natives bearing the ivory, with a supply of baked foot and trunk and a portion of the flesh. The natives had appropriated all the rest, and when I left them they were quarrelling over the remnant of the skull, whose marrowy bones were in high demand. They fought for every chip as it flew from the axe, and chewed it raw. On our way to camp we passed through the kraal of the Bakalahari, situated in the mountain range. In the valleys they had formed considerable gardens, in which corn and water-melons were extensively grown. I was right glad to reach my comfortable camp, and get a bowl of coffee.

On the evening of the 26th men kept pouring into camp heavily laden with the flesh of the elephant, a large part of which was for Sicomy: they halted with me for the night, and resumed their march in the morning.



CHAPTER XVI.

Elephant spooring with the Natives — The Mystic Dice — Hunt in a Wait-a-bit Thorn Cover — Romantic Gorge in the Mountains — Sabié — Ancient Elephant Path — Ludicrous Native Signal — A noble Bull Elephant slain — Isaac, my Interpreter, dismissed — A Lioness bagged at one Shot — Drunkenness and Disorder in Camp — My manner of taking the Field after the larger Game — Sicomy's Followers desert me.

ON the 27th of July I resolved to move my waggon's farther to the east, and informed the waggon-drivers of my intentions: they however raised many objections, and all but gave me a direct refusal. As I was not aware of the position of the waters, and knowing well that Isaac would not assist me in discovering them, I deemed it prudent first to make an excursion to the east on horseback. I accordingly stowed some ammunition and a washing-rod in my old game-bag (to the inside of which, by the by, adhered a goodly coating of the scales of grilse and salmon, along with sundry speckled and blood-stained feathers of the grouse and partridge), and having made bread and ground coffee sufficient for three days' consumption, I ordered two of my men to be ready to accompany me next morning. My interpreter's countenance never lacked a scowl; and, instead of forwarding my

interests, he actively employed his energies in sowing dissension betwixt me and the natives, and disseminating mutiny among my Hottentots. I discovered that all along he had deceived me, and carefully concealed the direction where elephants most abounded, and I began to think that, in justice to myself, it was high time that he should be ignominiously dismissed the service.

On the 28th, as I was breakfasting, natives arrived and reported fresh spoor within a mile of camp. I therefore resolved to defer for the present the trip to the eastward on which I had determined ; but it so happened that the spoor which was reported led me in that direction, and was the means of introducing me to a succession of fine hunting-districts, throughout which elephant and rhinoceros were abundant. Everything being ready, I proceeded to take up the spoor, accompanied by after-riders and about a hundred of the Bamangwato men, fresh parties having joined me : it was the spoor of a small troop of cow elephants. Mutchuisho and the spooring party took it up in a masterly manner, and went along at a rapid pace all day, with scarcely a check, until we found the elephants. The spoor led us first through a gorge in the mountains, which I mentioned as having rounded on the 24th ; after which we followed it in an easterly course, skirting the base of the mountain chain. The country increased in beauty as we advanced ; and, having followed the spoor some hours, it led us into a new va-

riety of country, and, as I fancied, into a new climate. Here large trees were abundant, and the grass and leaves were much greener than in the country we had left behind. We crossed the gravelly beds of two periodical rivers. In one of these I observed the recent spoor of a herd of bull elephants deeply imprinted in the sand. This day the wind, which had for weeks been cold and blighting, blowing off the icebergs of the Southern Ocean, shifted to north-east, and breathed warm and balmy upon us.

As we advanced the work of elephants became more and more apparent on the trees and in the earth, and late in the afternoon we reached ground where a large herd of cows had fed that morning. Here we had a short check, when Mutchuisho rated the trackers for their negligence ; and, having despatched parties to try back upon the spoor, and extended others to make casts on our right and left, he leisurely ensconced himself beneath a shady tree, and proceeded, along with several of his cronies, to enjoy the luxury of taking snuff, which important ceremony having been duly performed, they began with the utmost gravity to smooth a portion of the ground before them, preparatory to casting the mystic dice which most of the Bechuanas carry strung around their necks. These dice, which are of sundry indescribable shapes, are formed of ivory, and the Bechuanas invariably appeal to them before entering upon any project of importance, to ascertain the probability of its ultimate success. Having unstrung the

dice, which are four in number, they rattle them between their hands, and drop them on the ground, when the long-headed old men carefully study the directions of the points, and decide the merits of the case accordingly.

In the present instance the dice spoke favourably, auguring the speedy capture of an elephant; and one of the trackers at this moment coming up, and stating that his comrades had regained the spoor, we sprang to our feet, and again held on. We had proceeded about half a mile when we suddenly beheld a herd of about twelve old cow elephants, some of which were accompanied by little calves, feeding high on the side of the rocky mountain, about five hundred yards to our right. The intervening ground was a dense and almost impenetrable mass of wait-a-bit thorny bushes, averaging twenty feet in height, every inch of which was to be dreaded as the hooks upon a "kill-devil." On perceiving the elephants we halted, and Mutchuisho despatched two men to windward, in the hope of driving them from the impracticable ground they occupied into the level forest where we stood. The elephants, however, were much too wide awake to leave their stronghold of wait-a-bit bushes. On getting the wind of the men they tossed their trunks, and, wheeling about, they held along the mountain side at a rapid pace, until they reached an impenetrable jungle of thorns, from which all our efforts proved unavailing to dislodge them.

This jungle densely covered the sides and bottom of a wide semicircular basin or hollow in the mountains; it was throughout so dense, that a man on foot could scarcely penetrate it. When the elephants started I rode hard after them, followed by my after-riders, and, not understanding the intentions of the elephants, we followed on through the mazes of the jungle in an elephant path, until we reached the centre of the thicket, when we suddenly found ourselves upon them. The dogs then ran in barking, when a general trumpeting took place, and a charging and crashing in all directions, and, owing to the extremely dangerous nature of the ground, I was glad to beat a precipitate retreat.

Once more all was quiet; my dogs were jaded with the sun, and would not fight. Fancying that the elephants had gone ahead, and fearing to lose them, I again pushed on, holding the footpath as before; when crash came a second charge of elephants at our very elbows, accompanied by a trumpeting which caused our ears to tingle. They charged upon us from opposite directions, and we were actually in the very middle of them. They were extremely fierce, and, but for the dogs, not a man of us had escaped to tell the tale. Fortunately, the dogs, which they seemed to think designed the capture of their calves, engrossed their whole attention; whereas, by reason of the colour of the horses on which we rode, they took us for gregarious creatures like themselves; and actually graz-

ing our animals' haunches with their legs, they left us scatheless and pursued the dogs. I seldom remember a more startling or dangerous position ; it was a decided case of "De'il tak the hin'most." Spurs and jamboks were energetically plied ; there was no time to select a path. Placing my head below my horse's neck and trusting to Providence, I charged through the thickest of the thorns, and presently found myself out of the way of the elephants. I know nothing which so effectually teaches a hunter the art of riding through "Vacht um bigé," or "wait-a-bit" jungle, in an artistical manner, as hearing the trumpet of an enraged elephant, which is following about a spear's length in his wake. After a few such lessons he will have learnt to bring his breast in contact with the side of his horse's neck, his head being well under it, whereby his prominent feature will be secured, and, agitating his persuaders, he will dive through the most impracticable "wait-a-bits," with apparently the facility with which an Eton boy takes a header into the Thames at the Lion's Leap.

With very great difficulty we got clear of the cover, and gained the level forest on the lower side. By this time the natives had lined the side of the mountain above the cover, and were shouting and yelling in the hope of driving out the elephants ; but not a man would venture in. Presently some of them came round to me, and I proposed to go in on foot, but they would not hear of it,

saying that the elephants were extremely fierce, and would kill me to a certainty. I then proposed that all the natives should enter the jungle in a line, and try to drive them out, but they said that no power could force the elephants from their stronghold until night set in.

The elephants now shifted their ground a little, forcing their way through the jungle to the higher side of the basin. Leaving the horses in charge of a native, I went round to the line of men above. Here I commanded a fine view of the exasperated elephants, being high above them, and distant about two hundred and fifty yards, and I observed that they displayed considerable cunning in their movements. Placing my rifle on a forked branch, and giving it the proper elevation, I let drive at the nearest cow, and wounded her severely. The shot reverberated through the dale, and the dogs once more ran into the midst of them, when a general charge and trumpeting ensued, which was truly terrific. They rushed after the dogs, following them up to a great distance, crashing through and upsetting the high bushy wait-a-bits and other trees like grass. They then turned and formed in two separate detachments, standing thick together; but two wicked old cows that had calves stood far out from the others, with their heads turned to us, ready to charge whatever might approach. I saw that it was extremely dangerous to attack them, but the sun was now fast sinking behind a shoulder of the mountains, so I resolved to

defy all chances and enter the cover. I first, however, fired two shots at the elephants that formed the advanced piquets ; both cows got it in the ribs, and, finding themselves wounded, retreated to the main body, where they stood smashing the trees with rage, and, catching up volumes of the red dust with their trunks, threw it in clouds above their backs. Mutchuisho and I now descended into the jungle, and crept stealthily along, listening for the breathing of the elephants. They had moved to the lower side, and were standing thick together within one hundred yards of the outside. On ascertaining their position, we emerged from the cover, and followed along the outside until we were opposite them. I then stalked in within twenty yards, and fired at the side of the head of the elephant that stood next to me ; and before the smoke had cleared, my back was to them, and I was running for the outside of the cover at my utmost speed. The elephants held their ground ; so, having loaded, I again drew near and fired sharp right and left into another, and turning my back I ran for it once more. Re-entering the cover a third time, I was listening which way they had gone, when, casting my eyes to the left, a noble elephant lay dead before me. The ball had penetrated to her brain, and she had dropped dead upon the spot.

A little after this an old cow came charging after the dogs, and took up a position in the jungle close beside

us. We heard her preparing for a second charge, when the natives beat a precipitate retreat, but I very rashly waited to receive her, and just as she cleared the cover I let fly at her forehead. Regardless of my shot, she came down upon me at a tremendous pace, shrilly trumpeting. It was rather a near thing, for I was burdened with my rifle and rhinoceros-horn loading-rod, and my shooting-belt containing about forty rounds of ammunition. I escaped her by my speed, and the instant she halted I faced about, and gave her the other barrel behind the shoulder.

Night now set in, and I saw no more of the elephants. A number of them were wounded and must have died ; I, however, felt satisfied with the one I had secured. The natives made me more cautious than I should otherwise have been, and, had we found them at an earlier hour, I should probably have killed one half the troop. Weary and hungry, we formed our kraals and kindled fires ; after which, having partaken of the elephant, I lay down to sleep beside my fire.

On the 29th I sent Carollus to the waggons with instructions to bring all the horses and the Bushman, with bread, coffee, and ammunition. In the forenoon I ascended the neighbouring mountain-range, to obtain a view of the surrounding country. On clearing the first ridge I looked down upon a bold and romantic gorge, which here intersected the mountain chain, connecting the

forests on either side. Far below me through the bottom of the ravine twined the gravelly bed of a periodical river, which in the rainy season flows in an easterly direction. Though in all other parts this gravelly channel was now dry, yet just at this spot, deep in the bosom of the mountains, its bed was covered with delicious spring water to a depth of several inches; and here the elephants had excavated sundry holes, about two feet deep, for the purpose of drinking. I descended to the water by an elephant-path, and stood long contemplating the interesting spot. The bed of the river was deeply imprinted with the spoor of elephants, buffaloes, and rhinoceros, of various dates. The gorge was wide and open by the water, and its abrupt and rocky sides were adorned with a profusion of trees and shrubs. A little farther down the gorge was more confined, the river winding through huge perpendicular walls of rock, that raised their giant forms on both sides to a height of several hundred feet.

From the basis of these stupendous ramparts to the margin of the river on either side was a sloping bank, along which grew an avenue of picturesque acacias of enormous bulk and lofty stature; beneath these were well-beaten paths of elephants, and the sides of the trees were well polished to the usual distance from the ground. Leaving the river, I ascended to the summits of loftier hills beyond, where I commanded a glorious prospect of

the endless grey forests which stretched away as far as I could see over slightly undulating country, the faint blue outline of extensive mountain ranges bounding the landscape to the east. Descending from my lofty station, I discovered four bull-buffaloes feeding in the valley far beneath me ; I left them undisturbed, and bent my steps towards the carcase of the elephant.

In the evening Carollus arrived, bringing the horses and ammunition, and accompanied by a numerous body of the natives. At an early hour on the 30th I started with Mutchuisho and a numerous retinue to search for elephants in an easterly direction ; and we crossed the gravelly bed of the river Mahalapia, about a mile below the gorge I had visited on the preceding day. In after years I renewed my acquaintance with the Mahalapia, on the banks of the fair Limpopo, into which it empties itself several days' journey to the east.

This was one of the loveliest spots I had seen in Southern Africa : a bold bend of the river was adorned with groves of remarkably lofty and picturesque acacias. Three trees in particular, of the same description, graced the spot, which in size and beauty surpassed any I had hitherto met with, carrying their thickness to an immense height from the ground, when they divided into goodly branches, which stretched away in beauty to the skies.

Here, in the bed of the river, we took up the spoor of a huge bull elephant ; and having followed it a short distance

through the verdant forest, we started the old fellow, but no man saw him. The great body of the natives never would be quiet, and ever pressed upon the spooring party, notwithstanding my remonstrances. One native heard him, but said he thought it was a rhinoceros. In half a minute, however, we discovered our mistake, and there ensued a general rush upon the spoor, at a pace which must shortly have overtaken him, for he had not started in great alarm. Whistling to my dogs, they took up the scent and went ahead; but as I galloped after them, expecting every instant to behold the elephant, whose spoor I now saw beneath my horse's feet, an unlucky troop of camelopards dashed across our path, and away went all the dogs, leaving me in the lurch just as I was upon the elephant. The trackers, however, soon came up, and we again held briskly on; but had not proceeded far when we entered upon ground so covered with fresh footmarks that the trackers in their haste overran the spoor we followed, and a long check was the result. Here, to add to my annoyance, another large herd of camelopards came cantering up the wind, and dashed away before us, to spread further alarm. Old Mutchisho now came up in a state of intense excitement, his watery eyes fixed upon the ground, and his tongue going like perpetual motion. He blew up the trackers right and left, who seemed to quail before his menacing aspect, and redoubled their energies in the doubtful pursuit.

Presently one of these, loudly smacking his "nether end," intimated that he had hit off the proper spoor. This peculiar signal, I remarked, was used by the Bechuanas to warn one another on various occasions. In spooring game it was invariably practised ; and when a line of men were threading the mazes of the forest, each warned the man behind him of any rough sticks, stones, or thorns which lay across the path, by the same elegant and friendly gesture.

We resumed the spoor at a rapid pace, with a widely extended front, and presently on my left I heard the joyous signal of the presence, "Klow ;" and, cantering in that direction, I came full in sight of an enormous bull elephant, marching along at a free majestic pace, and in another minute I was riding by his side. The horse which I bestrode on this occasion was "The Cow," one of my best and steadiest shooting-horses ; and the forest being tolerably suited for the sport, I was not long in finishing the elephant. I fired thirteen bullets at his head and shoulder ; on receiving the last two shots sharp right and left behind the shoulder, he made a rapid charge, and disappeared among the trees. Cautiously following, I discovered him lying in an upright position, with his two fore-legs stretched out before him. Fancying he was still alive, I fired both barrels at his ear ; but though the balls rang loudly on his venerable head, the noble elephant heeded not their force ; his ancient spirit had departed.

This was a very large old elephant ; but his tusks were much destroyed, being worn down, and having been broken (probably in rocky ground) in former years. Mutchuisho appeared in the highest glee, and despatched messengers through the gorge in the mountains, the name of which is Sabié, to advise Sicomy of the death of the elephant. The chase had led me to within rifle range of the three veteran acacias I admired in the morning. I made my bower and a couch of grass beneath a shady wait-a-bit thorn-tree, and encircled my fire with a hedge of the same description.

I resolved to bring on my waggons to the pass of Sabié, where there was sufficient water for all my cattle, my intention being to continue hunting through the forests to the eastward, returning to Bamangwato by a different route. I, however, foresaw that I must give Isaac his dismissal before proposing such a measure ; and accordingly I rode to camp on the 1st day of August, and informed Mr. Isaac that his valuable services could for the future be dispensed with, requesting at the same time that he would make himself scarce as quickly as possible. I then explained to my Hottentots my future course ; and having directed them to inspan and follow me to Sabié, under guidance of the natives, I mounted the Old Grey, and started to return to my bower on the bank of the Mahalapia. The country between Letlochee and Sabié was almost impracticable for waggons, the forest in many

parts being extremely dense, and sundry difficult nullahs intervening. I therefore did not expect them to reach their destination till the afternoon of the following day. My men, however, did not appear until the evening of the third day. They did not seem at all to fancy the idea of following me farther through the wilderness; but finding they could make no better of it, they submitted to their fate; and no sooner had I turned my back than Mr. Kleinboy proposed that they should drown their sorrows in the bowl. This brilliant idea was unanimously seconded by all the rest. Axes and hatchets were immediately resorted to, the liquor was obtained, and before I had been gone an hour all hands were mortal drunk.

At an early hour on the following day I started with about sixty natives to look for elephants. We filled our water kalabashes at an elephant's hole in the bed of the Mahalapia, and held east through the forest; and presently we discovered the fresh spoor of two bull elephants. As we were threading the spoor, the dogs dashed up wind on some scent, and the forest was awakened with their music. I imagined they had found the elephants, and pressed through the thicket at my utmost speed. As I approached I heard a hoarse noise like the voice of an elephant; but my eye sought in vain for his lofty back towering above the wait-a-bits. I then fancied it must be a buffalo; but on rounding the thick bush, behind which my dogs were barking, I came full in sight of an

angry lioness, which stood lashing her tail, and growling fiercely at the dogs.

Observing the lioness, I shouted to the natives, who were pressing forward, that it was "Tao," when a head-long retreat was the immediate result, a number of the party taking refuge in the trees. I dismounted, and, advancing to within twenty yards of the lioness, I waited till she turned her head, when I fired at the back of her neck, and stretched her lifeless on the ground. The bullet had passed along the spine, and, penetrating the skull, rested in her brain. On shouting to the natives, for a long time none of them would venture to approach, and, when at length they did, their astonishment knew no bounds at beholding their formidable enemy so easily disposed of. Having resumed the spoor of the elephants, we soon ascertained that the hubbub with the lioness had started them; and after following the spoor some distance through dense jungle, and over very rocky ground, along the mountain side, the trackers declared themselves to be fairly beaten and we gave it up.

At an early hour on the 3rd I again held east with a large retinue to seek for elephants. We took up spoor at the fountains where I discovered borèlé on the preceding day. This spoor led us in a south-easterly course, first through verdant forest, and then over an extremely rugged ridge that stretched into the forest from the mountain chain. Beyond this ridge was an extensive and

almost impracticable jungle of wait-a-bit thorns, and in this jungle we now heard the rumbling sound of elephants. As we advanced I perceived from the nature of the ground that success was very doubtful, and in a few minutes the dogs, winding the elephants, ran in upon them and gave tongue; a crashing and trumpeting ensued, and all the natives shouted out "Machoa" (signifying white man). With the utmost difficulty I pressed through the jungle, and obtained a view of one of the elephants, around which my dogs were barking angrily; but perceiving that it was a small cow, and knowing well that if I shot her the natives would not take up spoor again for at least a couple of days, I reserved my fire; and the dogs being jaded by the sun, and returning to my call, we left the elephants to their own devices.

A few minutes afterwards we discovered the fresh spoor of two enormous bull elephants, which had pastured towards the hills. Having followed it a short distance, we came upon some dung, the outside of which the sun had not yet dried; from which we might presume that the elephants were at that moment in the same valley with ourselves. Two young men were despatched in haste to ascend the beetling crags of the adjacent mountain, from which they could obtain a bird's-eye view of the length and breadth of that and the surrounding valleys. The main body of the natives squatted on the ground, and I sat down to eat some bread and elephant,

and take a drink of water. I had scarcely time to finish my luncheon when the two young men returned breathless with excitement to report that they had discovered the two bull elephants browsing in a grove of thorny trees on the mountain side within a quarter of a mile of us. I approached under cover of a bushy tree, on clearing which I beheld two of the finest elephants in Africa standing broadside on within fifty yards. The finer of these had one of his tusks broken short off by the lip ; I therefore chose his comrade, which carried a pair of very long and perfect tusks. I had hard work with this elephant, and the sun was under before I laid him low.

On the 4th I rode for my bower on the Mahalapia, in the hope of finding my waggons waiting for me ; but I had misgivings about my men, who ought to have appeared on the evening of the 2nd. On reaching my bower where the former elephant had died, I found the fires still smoking, but every man had disappeared : Carollus, whom I had ordered to await me, had vanished with the rest. I now fancied that I must have missed the natives who had passed me on their way to the elephant of the previous day, and that Carollus had joined the waggons wherever they might be. I was right in my conjecture, and presently, on firing a signal shot, I received an answer from the waggons, which were drawn up in the romantic gorge of Sabié, as near as might be to the water. Drunkenness and disorder had prevailed during my absence, as

I had feared ; my chests were broken open, the fine cap-tents of both my waggons were most seriously damaged, oxen had been lost, and horses ridden off their legs in search of them. It appeared that Mr. Kleinboy had been the chief delinquent. Under the influence of the liquor, and anxious to distinguish himself, he had resolved to try his hand in hunting the giraffe. Accordingly he saddled Colesberg, my favourite steed, and borrowed one of my 80 guinea rifles, armed with which he had sped through the forest he knew not whither ; and eventually becoming bewildered, he had lost himself entirely. In this condition he was fortunately discovered by a party of Bakalahari, who conducted him safely to my camp.

I had at length got into the way of making myself tolerably comfortable in the field, and from this date I seldom went in quest of elephants without the following impedimenta, viz. a large blanket, which I folded and secured before my saddle, as a dragoon does his cloak ; and two leather sacks, containing a flannel shirt, warm trousers, and a woollen nightcap, spare ammunition, washing-rod, coffee, bread, sugar, pepper and salt, dried meat, a wooden bowl, and a teaspoon. These sacks were carried on the shoulders of the natives, for which service I remunerated them with beads. They also carried my coffee-kettle, two calabashes of water, two American axes, and two sickles, which I used every evening to cut grass for my bed, and likewise for my horses to eat throughout the

night. My after-rider carried extra ammunition and a spare rifle; and my own personal appointments consisted of a wide-awake hat, secured under my chin by "rheimpys," or strips of dressed skin, a coarse linen shirt, sometimes a kilt, and sometimes a pair of buckskin knee-breeches, and a pair of "veldtschoens," or home-made shoes. I entirely discarded coat, waistcoat, and neck-cloth, and I always hunted with my arms bare. My heels were armed with a pair of powerful persuaders, and from my left wrist depended by a double rheimpy an equally persuasive sea-cow jambok.

Around my waist I wore two leathern belts or girdles. The smaller of these discharged the duty of suspenders, and from it on my left side depended a plaited rheimpy, eight inches in length, forming a loop in which dangled my powerful loading-rod, formed of a solid piece of horn of the rhinoceros. The larger girdle was my shooting-belt: this was a broad leather belt, on which were fastened four separate compartments made of otter-skin, with flaps to button over of the same material. The first of these held my percussion-caps, the second a large powder-flask, the third and fourth, which had divisions in them, contained balls and patches, two sharp clasp-knives, a compass, flint and steel. In this belt I also carried a loading mallet, formed from the horn of the rhinoceros; this and the powder-flask were each secured to the belt by long rheimpys, to prevent my losing them. Last, but not

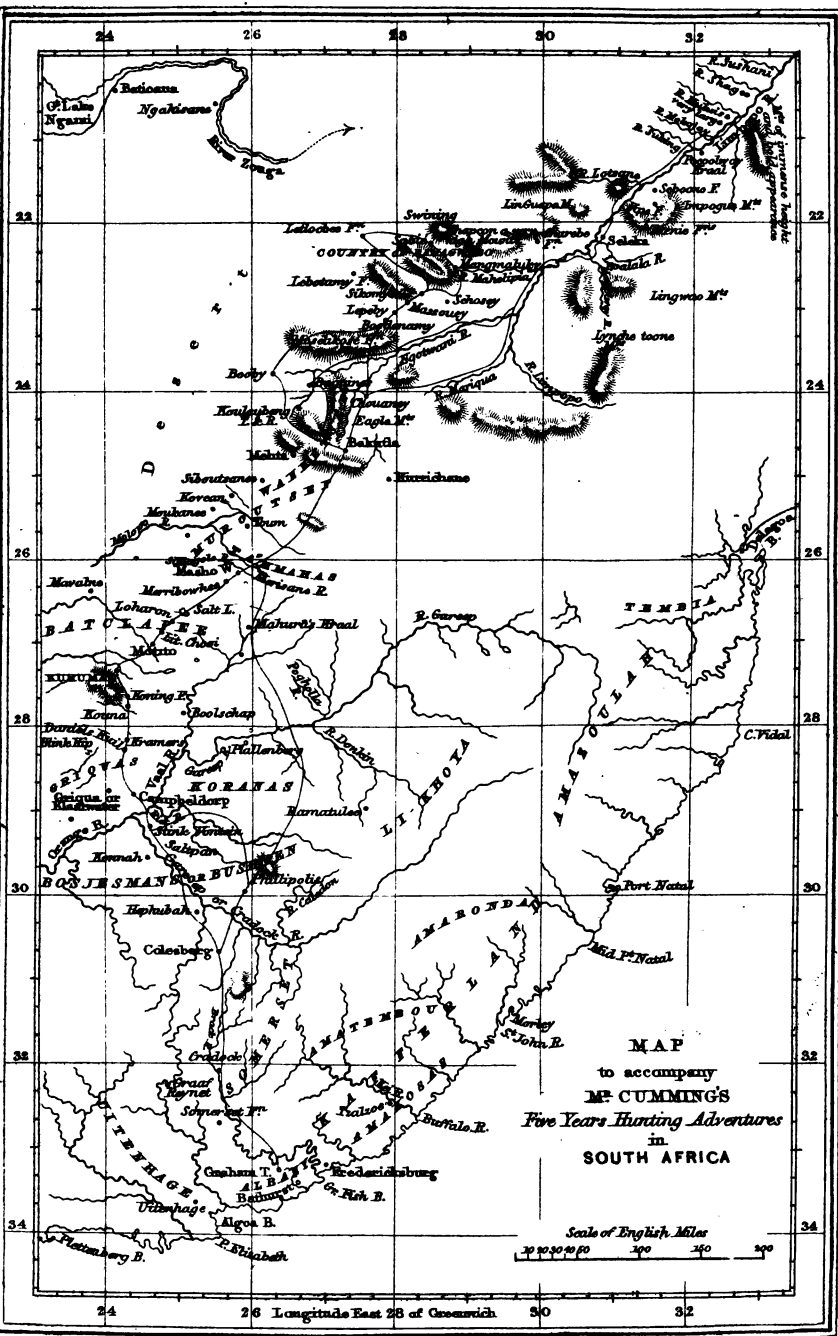
least, in my right hand I usually carried my double-barrelled two-grooved rifle, which was my favourite weapon. This, however, I subsequently made up my mind, is not the proper tool for a mounted man, especially when quick loading is necessary.

I remember having a discussion with the commanding officer of a regiment of heavy dragoons on this subject, and he and I agreed that nothing can surpass a double-barrelled smooth bore for practical utility. When a two-grooved rifle has been once or twice discharged, the bullet requires considerable power to drive it home; and to a mounted man this is extremely inconvenient. I consider that no regiment in the service was more effectually armed than my own old corps, the Cape Mounted Rifles, who were furnished with short double-barrelled smooth-bored pieces, carrying a ball of twelve to the pound, and having stout percussion-locks. Give me a weapon of this description to war against the larger game of Africa. To accelerate loading, the hunter ought to have his balls stitched up in their patches, and well greased before taking the field. This was my invariable custom: I found it a great convenience, and after a little practice I could load and fire in the saddle, although riding in rough ground at a swingeing gallop.

On the evening of the 12th a herald from Sicomy stood up in the centre of my camp, and loudly proclaimed that it was the king's orders 'that on the following day

every man should return to head-quarters; and accordingly next day all hands shouldered their impedimenta and forsook me. I could not rightly divine the cause of this mysterious command; but I attributed it to some plotting scheme of Isaac's, who I understand was living with Sicomy. I saw very plainly that Mutchuisho was against the move. In consideration of his services, I begged his acceptance of several considerable presents, and I also sent some presents to the king. On parting, Mutchuisho promised shortly to return, and he informed me that he had instructed a party of Bakalahari to assist me in my hunting during his absence.

END OF VOLUME I.



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